

REASON.

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA.

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason", c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. Articles are accepted for publication on condition that they are not sent to any other journal. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

BY THE WAYSIDE

Since we went to press, an event has occurred in Bombay that is of great significance to all those that stand for progress. Mr. Purushottam Tricumdas had arranged

to produce his play "Naya" at the Royal Opera House. Miss. Masani, the Parsee lady who was to act, at the persuasion of Mr. Tricumdas and her brother, had agreed, though most unwillingly, to

withdraw from the play. The organisers understood that this would satisfy the wounded feelings of the Parsee community who considered this action of the Parsee lady very undesirable and had voiced their strong protests through the editorial and news-columns of the *Jame Jamshed*. Such as had purchased tickets drove to the theatre longing to see a 'modern Indian drama' But this was not to be. Long before the play was advertised to start, there had gathered at the theatre, Parsees old and young in white coats and black coats, in skull caps and tall caps. Some had come walking, some by tram, some by bus, some by cars and a good many in lorries. Some spoke, some gesticulated, more shouted. Some carried banners and some big sticks to kill reptiles that one meets so often on the Bombay roads. Most of these had never been on a stage, some had appeared on the school-stage, while a few had let their wives and daughters act on the public stage before. It was all a pandemonium. The foot path, the garden, the theatre and even the stage was full of these. Their wounds had really not healed. They had suddenly gone septic again. It was not enough that Miss Masani did not act. They wanted portions of the play to be deleted. They wanted the play not to be staged! They wanted the copies of the play to be publicly burnt. Mr. Purushottam refused to alter the play or to burn the copies. He decided not to stage the play. The crowd swelled; some were molested. The ardent theatre-goers saw the "Old Play". The police looked on and did

not move their little finger to clear either the theatre or the garden or the footpath—commendable impartiality! Mr. Murzban who so valiantly fought the battle of the no-changers stayed in bed with a weak heart.

* * *

A lot has been written about the motives on either side; that does not concern us. But certain conclusions one is forced to draw. The first is that the bulk of the Parsee community is still very orthodox. We wrote about it in our last issue. No one can say that this community is illiterate. One only feels constrained to say that in the crowd that assembled that evening education had failed miserably; in them it had not developed that breadth of vision and love of progress that one always associates with culture. Probably it is all superficial; otherwise it is impossible to conjecture up such a situation where an orthodox press could rouse up such tempers. And what was it all for? Because a Parsee lady was to act *on the stage* with Hindoos; because she was to marry a Hindoo *on the stage*. Times without number, Parsee girls have appeared on the stage. Hundreds of Parsee young men have married Europeans; so have a few Parsee girls. Their houses were not raided. But the rub is that here it is a Hindoo. Just a colour bar among the coloured. A visit to the Willingdon Sports Club or the Taj will show you Parsee ladies dancing with Europeans. That does not matter. There are no protests. It would have been quite alright if a Hindoo married a Parsee after being converted to Zoroastrianism—but what

am I saying? Zoroasterianism admits no converts. But even in "Nyaya" there are no conversions. Each one kept to his or her religion, if at all they had any, for if they were orthodox how could they dream of such a monstrous thing? Some of my touchy Parsee friends said to me "But he could have made a Hindoo marry a Muslim. Why a Parsee particularly?" He might have and that is exactly where he made the mistake. Mr. Purushottam went out of his way to pay a high compliment to the Parsees who he thought were advanced enough to jump over the barriers of orthodox society and he has received a rude shock.

So orthodoxy and ignorance ruled in Bombay. We have to be as we were 2,000 years back. No change or the gods will be unhappy. Orthodoxy obtained the support of the powers that be. The Police Commissioner did not clear either the theatre or the compound of the rowdy elements. Two days after, he found the play objectionable and banned it. This is not new either. It is the old play again. We as reformers have to fight the majority, and the rulers are in that majority. Laws, social and civil stand against us. Yet no rigour of the law has been able to withstand for all time the force of reason and knowledge. The same crowd that shouted and jeered at "Nyaya" will one day shout and jeer at anything else. They do not think. Others have to think for them. That is why the Rationalist Association exists—to flash the light of Reason into darkness, bigotry and superstition. That is

why every supporter of reason must bestir himself, join the band and organise the brigade to fight orthodoxy. Two eminent Parsee citizens who were present that evening felt this and have already sent their applications for membership.

Letters appeared in the press condemning the incident. But how surprising that not one of the leading Parsees said anything. Human beings are very anxious to wield power and this can only be done by humouring the ignorant. Every man in power and position is not bold enough to take risks to put forward a new vision before his devotees. He may succeed or fail. Whether he succeeds or fails, he is great that lights the torch and holds it aloft till he succeeds in kindling that of every one else or till he fails and burns himself down to ashes. So all honour to Miss Masani.

Ever since the Truce, Seth Jamanlal Progress Bajaj, has been devoting his attention to the removal of untouchability. There are many reformers in this country and each one of them has his own way. The Untouchables are fighting a battle at Nasik to see and hold sacred objects. They have hitched their wagon to the stars, at least heaven is supposed to be somewhere there. But Seth Jamanlal is different. In spite of his millions he is a socialist in spirit. He is trying to improve the social amenities of these untouchables. Opening wells for their use may seem a trifle to us living in the cities. But in the villages a good well is an asset and the

freedom to use it is a concession that is certainly very much appreciated. The kernel of the dispute between the caste Hindus and the Untouchables is the denial of equal social rights in this world, and if they are satisfied on the material side there will be only a negligible minority who will still hanker after entry to the Ram temple at Nasik or elsewhere. Untouchability is a social evil because it debars a section from a full enjoyment of their existence. The village well not only supplies a grossly material need in the form of water, but it serves as a ladies' club, and the wives of the depressed classes have to be thankful to Seth Bajaj for removing the bar that so far existed against them. Though public institutions may not be primarily intended to foster any discriminatory tendency, yet as time goes on such a feeling grows because of the people that use it. Public bodies may send inspection committees but I have grave doubts as to their results, knowing full well that a large number of members of our public bodies hold very orthodox views. We therefore congratulate the Baroda Government on their recent legislation. I hope they will see to it that it does not become a dead letter. Seth Bajaj has taken a line which has greater chances to leave a more permanent result as all that he has achieved has been through the willing consent of the people.

I sympathise with the doctors. The poor fellows get all the blame if any-

Small-Pox thing goes wrong with
and Gur. their patients; while if
they do well then they

share their laurels with the deity. I am inclined to make these remarks because yesterday I met a lady who was on her way to a "small-pox god" to offer him her child's weight in *gur*. She is a Mohamadan lady but certainly catholic in her tastes. She is nothing exceptional. The Bandra shrine attracts all communities, so did Baba Ban of Poona and so does the incorruptible body of the saint at Goa. In the early stages of human development the magician combined the duties of the priest and the doctor. Since then, these duties have become so arduous, extensive and special, that they are seldom combined in one. Still though the medicine man keeps to his sphere, the priest constantly transgresses his limits and claims not only to be a body healer but a healer of a superior type as well. All religions have enthroned a medical faculty in the next world and this faculty has a list of specialists. They have attained that eminence not through the door of any examination conducted in the University of Heaven, but by their suffering on this earth. If one had a tooth-ache he becomes a dentist, one a broken limb, a surgeon, one a sore throat, a throat-specialist, if one had helped in a plague epidemic, a specialist for fevers, and if a virgin had perchance by accident or otherwise witnessed a confinement case she is promptly promoted to the chair of obstetrics. Likewise you have special gods for measles, small-pox etc. Leaving aside the very ignorant, even the semi-educated still believe in this, and discontinue the services of their family physician as soon as measles or small-pox breaks out. These

heavenly specialists have thier compounders on this earth who alone can decipher and despense their prescriptions. One such compounder, needless to say they are all religious heads, writes in red ink a few words on a piece of paper and asks the party to soak this paper in a tumblerfull of water, which the patient has to take in teaspoonful doses a certain number of times in a day. His minimum charges for doing this runs into some hundreds of rupees but the extent of the cures has never been proportional. It is quite common to see and hear of chronic invalides being carted from shrine to shrine and once in a way you hear of miracles being performed. Just now we hear of a paralytic child of six who was taken to kiss the feet of St. Francis and there felt a sudden feeling and started to walk. This and such other incidents are thrown at our face and we are asked to explain. In quite a number of cases a definite explanation is not possible. Yet why don't these saints, gods and pirs perform these miracles oftener? The world is so full of misery and if

there is any person who can believe that person should be charged with criminal neglect if he or she does not do more than what is done today. The disappointments are so many. A lady has a daughter who is ill for the last six years with an organic nervous disease. The Bombay doctors have all tried their hands and they have failed. Then she tried the various shrines of saints, gods and pirs, with no result. One day somebody suggested another name and then she turned round and said, that the only statue that she has not approached so far is the Parsee Statue, and the next day she was going to him to promise him a pair of lighted candles if her daughter got well. The Parsee Statue will be just as powerful as the others. That was the outcome of bitter experience. But under the tutelage of priests the rest who are disappointed, will lay the blame at their own door and think they are great sinners and hence are not worthy of the kindness of the gods.

ALI AKBAR.

IS RATIONALISM BOLSHEVIST ?

It may surprise some Indian Rationalists if I say that England is the most Rationalist country in the world. Living in London, I make that assertion. Having dwelt in England 76 years, I say it. And I repeat it after a 50 years open and definite attachment to Rationalism and its anti-theological activities. I took part in the work which, in 1890 to 1899, led up to the formation of the Rationalist Press Association, and have written in the "Literary Guide" (Rationalist Review) since 1886. I wrote an article in Charles Bradlaugh's "National Reformer" in 1882. In Mr. George W. Foote's "Free-thinker" I uttered Rationalism in 1891, and, in the same paper (now edited by Mr. Cohen), in November, 1931, I criticized the Christian faith. So nobody can affirm that I do not know English Rationalism.

But is not the Christian Church strong in England? It is. And does not that fact disprove the power of Free-thought and anti-theology? No, it does not. The truth is that a great many things are active in England, even things contrary in aim and method. The Conservative Party is strong: so is the Labour Party, which commanded a third of the votes (7,000,000 votes) in the General Election of October, 1931. Or take another example in medicine. The British Medical Association is an extremely powerful body; yet England has, for many years, had an extremely powerful opposition to vaccina-

tion, in spite of the official medical support to the vaccine inoculation. Our public life is full of such instances of contradiction and conflict. Hence the large part played by the churches in no wise prevents the strenuous part played by Free-thought in the press and in the penetration of social mentality. I have visited the United States, and I declare that Rationalism is much weaker in North America than in England.

It is perfectly true that in France the literature and the ranks of political leaders are very obviously influenced by anti-theology; but France has a vast number of villages, and small towns in which the people are devoutly Catholic. Germany has a massive Rationalist literature but, Rationalism has not expressed itself in the popular, strident, open-air and mass-meeting style associated with the careers of such pioneers as Holyoake, Bradlaugh and Foote. And when I look at Spain, Italy, Portugal, Austria and the rest, I do not see reason to modify my view of the English superiority. Certainly, our Rationalism has to meet the forces of thousands of churches and chapels, and not a few synagogues. It flourishes all the same. We can smile as we notice how our propaganda affects the ideas and creeds of orthodoxy. England is so small a country that we are able to observe our neighbours at close quarters, and judge the results of intellectual labour.

And now, with an eye on Russia, the Soviet Republic and the Bolshevik theory and industrial practice, I make another assertion, and I say England is very far from Bolshevism. I have been familiar with the broad currents of Socialism and Labour for half a century, and have published the biography of the famous Social-democratic agitator, and friend of India,—Henry M. Hyndman. I knew Hyndman well; and I have met and talked with Keir Hardie, Lansbury, Clynes, and many other Labour leaders. A few Communists in England may be classed as Bolshevik. The enormous mass of Socialist and Labour women and men are not Bolshevik, and are never likely to be. In 1919, I wrote an Open Letter to Lenin (printed in the paper "Justice," the Social-democratic organ) and it concluded with the demand: "Hands off England!" What I said then would be said by millions of English Labour folk in 1932. I can add that quite a considerable number of English Rationalists are, politically, Liberals and Conservatives. Russian Bolsheviks and very many Continental European Socialists, who are often violently anti-theological, cannot understand these English facts. You have to live a long time in England before you can comprehend how, owing to our position on an island, we have had a far more natural opportunity for political and

intellectual debate, division, and variety. We have numerous types and shades of Freethought. You can call them sects, if you choose; but the diversities are plain, recognized and accepted. We English are incapable of developing a rigid mass production of Rationalism. We are too individualist and too mobile. And for the same psychological reason, we are incapable of developing the rigid, well-drilled and uniform kind of economic and political life which is the present expression of Russian Bolshevism. In making these remarks, I am not even offering objections to the Bolshevik theory and methods. I simply survey England as England, and declare that England is the most Rationalist community on earth, and that it does not lean to Bolshevism. All sorts of things may happen outside England. I cannot run round the globe and comment on them. But, to any man who fancies that Rationalism implies a tendency to Russian Bolshevism, I give a short reply: "Look at England."

F. G. GOULD

[We are glad to have the emphatic opinion of such an experienced English citizen as Mr. Gould on the position of Rationalism in England. As he, himself, admits though the position of Rationalism is firm in England, the Churches there are nonetheless still very powerful. The Lord Chief Justice of Scotland recently declared in open Court that England was the most priest-ridden country in the world.]

(Ed. REASON).

EDITORIAL

**The Exposition of St. Francis Xavier.
Exploiting Ignorance and Credulity.**

In our last issue, we adverted not only to the great wealth of the Churches accumulated during centuries, but also to their other valuable resources which they can tap as they like. The exploitation of the masses, under the guise of piety and faith, is one of these resources. While the economic stress which has now gripped the world so tightly all over put great States at their wits end to make ends meet, the churches have only to organize a stunt to find money flowing into their coffers. For this they solely depend upon the credulity and ignorance of the masses. Priests have recognised long ago how the ignorant and credulous, all over the world, will undergo any hardship and privation, and will make any sacrifice under the erroneous belief that in doing so they are fulfilling a solemn religious duty. Under such circumstances the poorest will embark on long journeys, will freely part with their money, and will rejoice that they have done so in the cause of religion and for the good of their souls. This peculiar hold of religion on the populace is one of the inexhaustible sources of the great wealth of the Churches. As Mr. J. M. Robertson tells us in his "The Dynamics of Religions" this constitutes the great power of the Churches all over. All the Churches know how to exploit the masses, but for organization and advertisement of religious stunts none can beat the Roman

Catholic Church. Ever since it consolidated itself as a powerful religion, it has specialized in inventing new cults, new festivals and ceremonies of an impressive kind which always attract thousands. Knowing the weakness of people for pomp and pageantry, it knows how to organize these on a magnificent scale to strike the imagination. The Eucharistic Congress, which is now held every year in different countries, is a case in point. A careful study has been made to impress the world with the vitality and prosperity of that Church, and the ceremonies in connection with that Congress never fail to leave a lasting impression on the minds of imaginative and emotional folk. In the Middle Ages the traffic in bogus relics and the sale of indulgences etc was a source of considerable revenue to the Church, and even now it carries on a flourishing trade in these commodities in countries where enlightenment has not quite penetrated. Here, in India, the Roman Catholic priests of Goa have a gold mine in the shrine of St. Francis Xavier. It was certainly a shrewd foresight on their part to provide themselves with such a shrine as a money-making concern. They would have been fools if they did not do it, for India is a land of curious faiths and superstitions. The Indians love pilgrimages; they have an unbounded respect for temples, tombs and shrines with a reputation

for the miraculous. Every year there are hundreds of pilgrimage all over the land and some of them like the Kumbha Mela at Allahabad, the Pandarpur Fair and Jaggarnath festivals at Puri attract thousands of people who journey thither from far. Thousands of Mohamedans leave India every year for Mecca and no hardship will deter them from going there, such is the weakness of the Indians for religious pilgrimages. The Jesuits who had established themselves in Goa, with their well-known shrewdness, saw the possibility of making money easily in installing one of their own members as a saint in a land where the natural disposition of the people was grossly superstitious. They soon surrounded the life of Xavier, a zealous missionary who had died in the East, with the most extravagant legends and amazing records. For instance the body of Xavier was found to be incorruptible, a fact attested by some pious Catholic "authorities" who evidently relied on what they heard. (Xavier, who died in China, had expressed a desire that his body should be transported to India. Unless his followers knew before hand that he was a saint and that his body would be miraculously preserved, it is only a common sense view to expect that they took precautions to preserve his body). The body exhibited miraculous signs such as blood flowing from the place where one arm was amputated after two hundred years of death! Many resurrections are believed to have taken place by mere contact with

the corpse, an absurdity that some educated Goans repeat even now without the slightest hesitation! Lesser miracles, of course, are too numerous to record and the wonder has not ceased after four hundred years hence the frequent expositions. Only the flow of blood has mysteriously ceased which is a great pity. Such is the credulity and stupidity of Indians in matters "religious" in the 20th century. The fame of Xavier as a great saint has been boosted by the Jesuits who soon discovered that his shrine was a gold mine and his reputation a great advertisement for their own Society. Xavier was himself a Jesuit. Did not the Society of Jesus, of which Xavier was one of the founders, come into existence for the Greater Glory of God? Its motto A. M. D. G. boldly proclaims this to the world.

There is nothing surprising then that the fame and reputation of Xavier as a great saint is fully established in world. The Jesuits saw to this properly. Few remember that that zealous missionary was a fanatic burning with the desire to exterminate the Jews in India and to establish the Inquisition in Goa to compel people to believe like him. His own European contemporaries did not, assuredly, believe him to be a Saint while the Indian converts believed that even fishes on the shores of Goa listened to his sermons! In the course of time he came to be venerated as the Apostle of the East, a title that the modern Jesuits particularly love to proclaim to the world. His Shrine in Goa is to day the centre

of attraction of Catholic belief in Western India. Whenever the priests of Goa are in need of money they hold an exposition of the body taking care to announce that it will be the last, and they are certain of a rich harvest. The less intelligent Catholics, and even non-Catholics who are just as credulous and superstitious, rush to Goa in great numbers to catch a momentary glimpse of the relic and to foolishly part with their money. Goa is a poor country, its commercial prosperity was ruined by the early European priests who scared most of the rich natives away. Xavier, himself, helped much to ruin Goa. To day, the ruins and desolation of Old Goa are an eloquent and sad testimony to what religious fanaticism and zeal can do to a country. Deserted churches and convents full of weeds and grass, in utter dilapidation are all that remain of what was once a flourishing city. Wild animals, bats and owls now live in the place. It is a dead city and the cult of Xavier is appropriately the cult of the dead. Just now an exposition is being held and many pilgrims, as usual, rush to Goa. As a business proposition it is welcomed by more people than the priests themselves. The steam-ship companies, hotel-keepers, provision dealers, wine merchants, the Government of Goa, the local people in general and even the *Times of India* of Bombay find this a splendid occasion to make money—The clergy of Goa call the tune and the credulous pilgrims pay the piper. The following description in "The Times of India" shows how money

was mulcted out of the pilgrims:—

"Before nightfall many thousands had achieved the objective of their pilgrimage and the offerings in cash and kind had assumed very respectable proportions. It is not possible to say what amount in cash the pilgrims contribute directly to the Church through this channel, but it runs into lakhs of rupees, while to the Portuguese Colony of Goa the income also runs into several lakhs. He is taxed at every turn, small sums certainly, but amounting in the aggregate to an appreciable item in the expenses of the pilgrimage. He pays a transport tax on entering and leaving the country, varying from two annas up to twelve. Every package of luggage means two annas. Every time he goes by bus or car to or from Old Goa he pays two annas more. There is a special licence to be paid by the bus or car owner for the privilege of running to Old Goa. This is of course, passed on to the passenger. Hotel charges are advanced fifty per cent, while the pilgrim who decides to camp at Old Goa and purchase his food has to pay extra for it to meet the heavy charges made to the stall holders for the plots they occupy.

IMMENSE BAZAAR.

The surroundings of the Cathedral and Church have become an immense bazaar, where anything the pilgrim requires to live and almost any luxury in addition may be had with little difficulty. Stall after stall is devoted to the sale of candles and offerings in wax only, and before the exposition

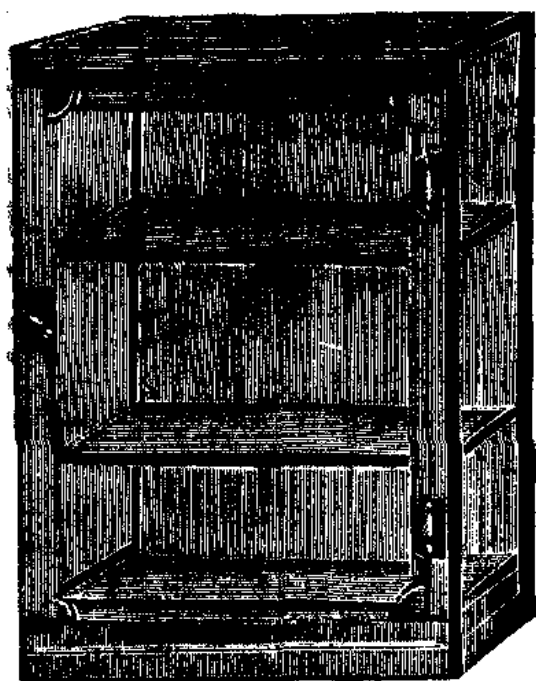
is over many millions of candles will have been sold to pilgrims, many of whom present 30 or 40 on each day of their sojourn in Old Goa.

The night scene shortly after dusk is almost, beyond belief, as everywhere, inside the Churches and round the statues outside, are to be seen burning innumerable candles of all sizes."

One wonders whether the more

intelligent among the Goans begin to see through the game. Two remarkable articles in "The Bombay Chronicle" by Goans on this stunt would seem to show that the writers, at any rate, consider the whole thing to be an exploitation. It is to be hoped that with enlightenment the Goans themselves will gradually discourage such exploitation and fall in line with other civilized people in combatting superstitions and idolatry.

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HELL

By

R. R. SRESHTA. M.A, LL.B. (CANTAB).

(Mr. Sreshta is the first Asiatic to win the Chancellor's Medal for original verse at Cambridge. His prize poem, quite curiously, was on St. Louis of France. Mr. Sreshta is now in the English Department of the Lucknow University)

They who say that God's eternal
ustice doth condemn and spurn all
Erring souls to flames infernal
Verily do lie.

They the light for gloom have bartered,
They have with their reason parted,
Or they are too craven-hearted
Falsehood to decry.

Yet this falsehood bears the label
Of a wild and wicked fable,
By which ancient priests were able
Mankind to ensnare.

For in those sad times when error,
Than the Voice of Reason clearer
Seemed to men this tale of terror
Caught them unaware.

Then in their distorted vision
Rose a place of dread perdition,
Where no respite nor remission
Comes to any soul :

Since be it a single failing
Of the flesh all unavailing
Are its pains and prayers and wailing
Tho' the aeons roll.

Nor can the wild dreams of fever,
Nor can healthy fancy ever,
Paint with uttermost endeavour
Scenes where dwell the damned :
In a plain immense, abysmal,
Gorged with great fires cataclysmal,
Showing by their glimmer dismal,
How that Hell is crammed.

Here enthroned in ghastly glamour,
Satan holds his sceptre-hammer,
Here amid the ceaseless clamour
Thro' infinity.

Surge a myriad curses breathless,
Love here turns to hatred deathless,
Every good to evil nathless,
Each in its degree.

Of the damned and of the devils,
Of their torments and dire evils,
Of their dreary groans and revels,
No more will I tell :

I for one have no grim relish
For this sort of legend hellish
Which the preachers oft embellish
Simple folks to quell.

But I ask them full sincerely,
Wherefore do we pay so dearly-
Out of all proportion clearly-
For our fragile sins ?

In this vale of dimness groping,
Vainly with our sorrows coping,
While we live on praying, hoping,
Setteth God his gins ?

In their fears and doubtings blinder
Have they waxed-they need reminder :
Certes, God is wiser, kinder,
Tho' they swear and rave.

Else, since ages past, they knew well,
He could never be so cruel
With His everlasting fuel-
Lying priest and slave !

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A Secretary writes : "My Will-Power has certainly improved. I am less Self-conscious. I have developed greater determination—a will to succeed—and more tolerance towards others." (J. 32,148.)

A Typist writes : "There is a great improvement in my Memory. I can recall things now without the great exertion which was required before I had the Course." (C. 32,509.)

A Solicitor reports that he has increased in Self-confidence, alertness and self-control. He has also gained stronger powers of Perception and Concentration." (W. 32,651.)

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Occupation.....

FAITH AND RACIAL UNITY.

In the Hibbert Journal for July 1931, Prof. Rudolf Otto of the University of Marburg, Germany, pleads for the formation of an inter-religious league. The theological professor evinces intimate knowledge of Indian conditions, and as the apologists of religions share his views, it is worthwhile to examine them. He confesses that theology can have little regard for "people who have cast aside religion". He feels that by a "vague, humanistic attitude towards life" religion becomes "watered down". The popular slogans such as 'the Fatherhood of God' and the 'brotherhood of man' either mean something very different to every individual or nothing very concrete to any. The learned university professor seemed to identify people of character with men and women of a definite religious tradition 'with their own particular and special religious experience' who represent specific religious communities, as much as to say that beyond the pale of such religious communities, men and women of character will be looked for in vain. The attitude of the theologian's mind is made clearer when he links unbelief with 'profanity' and 'worldliness'. "The really religious man is not at home among the religious cosmopolitans, the mollifiers, and those of threadbare faith, the masters of compromise, and the rationalists."

Barring very few religions that had, on historic grounds, imbibed the spirit of tolerance, it may, in

general, be stated that religion, real religion as understood by theologians and practised by true votaries, is uncompromising. Its exclusiveness is the hall-mark of merit. "The characteristic claim of all religions is that they alone embody the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" writes Dr. R. P. Paranjpye in "The Crux of the Indian Problem" (p.104). Each religion claims that it is the best. A climb-down from this position is the negation of "real faith" and Rudolf Otto recognises that "exclusiveness and competition belong to the nature of religion with its claim to absoluteness and finality." Absolute finality is the lifebreath of religion. By its absence faith withers away. "Those that believe that by comparison they can demonstrate the equality of all religions and that the time is not far distant when they will all resolve into one common denominator" are the cosmopolitans of religion and not seldom also of national life.

Professor Rudolf Otto claims that those cosmopolitans of religious and national life make a tremendous error and that 'facts contradict them.' It is not the present purpose to dwell upon real religion as affecting modern national life and the diverse entanglements that it has brought forth in the west. On the merely religious side, modern church attendance and the scant attention bestowed by the *homo sapiens* of the twentieth century to theology do not dim the professor's vision. He

writes, "Through powerful movements of inward reform and new creative activity the impulse is apparent afresh on every side to reinforce the particular foundation and the inner content of each faith in its distinct individuality, and to come to a new realisation of its own peculiar essence." While the modern clergyman regrets his empty pews, while picture houses and motoring attract crowds out of the church, while Sunday games defy legislation, and while Sabbattarians are unable to meet the invasion of business over the Lord's day, it is difficult to perceive the inward reform and the new creative activity that yet sustains the hope of learned divines. The impulse is not only not apparent, but on every side the contrary impulse is unmistakable to keep away from the church, the mosque and the temple.

Nor does the professor's tremendous error stop there. "Each of the great religions, including those of the east (one must thank him for including the east) in the measure that they are now being inwardly revived and built up anew (by a process akin to the German gland-graft treatment) are the strongest forces making for the creation of conscience." According to his prescription conscience would be absent in a world devoid of aggressive religionism. "Religions gave the powerful impetus to combat injustice, violence, deception, selfishness, sensuality, and an unenlightened dependence upon Nature." Oh, theology, where dost thou lead? Whom do the facts contradict?

If history taught that religion wrought injustice more than it combatted it, if it was true that there was greater violence resulting from religion than it ever put down, if deception was practised more in the name of religion than otherwise, if it should have become possible for the poor man to be the victim of exploitation, if the ranks of the religionists were lined with self-seekers and vicious and sensually-indulging dignitaries, and if religious culture meant the exclusion of the rays of science from penetrating human life and its environment by imposing heavy penalties, will Prof. Rudolf Otto yet maintain his tremendous error even when the facts contradict him? At every step, in every word, he is confronted by facts. There was no justice for him who went beyond the pale of religion. Out of the church was the outlaw whose life could be put an end to with impunity. The rack, the burning stake, crusades, the inquisition and other mild examples abound in religion of violence. As to deception and selfishness, humanity did not improve under the cover of religion more than under the larger sky. The root, primary foundation of religion is laid in deception that seeks to drug the less fortunate sections of humanity into a fond hope of a better 'beyond' to the utter neglect of the painful 'now'. The preference of poverty in clerical theory while church-practice assists accumulation of wealth is an organised system of deception perpetuating disparities in the levels of living and comfort. There were lives ill-lived in religious fortresses, while affluence

on the one hand and forced discipline of sex-repression on the other were potent factors of seduced morals. And lastly, while modern science is lightening up the path of man by disclosing his place in nature, religion fondly seeks to cling to the old-world notions of creation in six days, six thousand years ago, out of nothing. Nay, an enlightened religious state in the New World, imprisoned the other day a school-master for teaching Evolution to the pupils. The age of the earth and of man and many a fact of modern science are sought to be incorporated by modernist clergymen, but Rudolf Otto's digestion would not assimilate science to the point of compromising the peculiar essence of his religious theory. Several high dignitaries of the Church of England and elsewhere claim to revise their Bible in the light of new discoveries in Geology, Biology and Anthropology, and seek to reinterpret their religious convictions in terms known to the twentieth century. Anyway, dependence upon nature cannot be labelled as 'unenlightened' but on the other hand dependence upon an agency about whose personality or purpose there is as much evidence one way as the other is logically condemnable.

The crown of professorial utterance is reached when he says: "Despite the great variety that exists among religions, one thing binds them together. The religious character and impulse as such, and a common antagonism to materialism and irreligion." The religious impulse as such engenders a common antagonism to

irreligion. "He who knows nothing of his, *who has not felt the silent pull* which secretly draws to one another and unites the religiously minded from the most diverse groups has himself no religion but a strange monstrosity in its place." And again "however strong their opposition may be, yet a silent sympathy attracts the religious to the religious. They recognise one another by a peculiar sensitiveness as opposed to unbelief, profanity and worldliness, they recognise a common unity in religion through their own common antagonism to irreligion." Humanitarianism in religion has its limitations. In the absence of the irreligious, religion A has no sympathy for religion B. One fights the other to the point of death, for exclusiveness, absoluteness, and finality are the essence of any religion. Irreligion steps in and seals the bond of sympathy among the battling creeds. Irreligion is the point where all religions meet. Save that point, there is no other point of contact nor factor of community amongst them. If by irreligion is understood the negation of religion, it is manifest that unity or the silent sympathy for one another exists in a state of mere negation, or is otherwise non-existent. Each religion combats the rest in so far as they negative its teachings, its creed, and its exclusive merit. Real religion cannot afford to compromise or forego its superior claim for competition. Even so, the sympathy and the silent pull do not function if such exclusiveness is questioned. There is something obviously wrong somewhere in professorial reasoning.

One common cry too often heard

refers to the repercussions resulting from contact between the east and the west, there having long existed a migration of western culture to the east. The cry is louder than it should have been. The imparting of western technical knowledge, of western materialism and scepticism and of "our intellectual refuse" is decried. Unless Oriental peoples are to continue in their other-worldliness for ever, the opium of religion should give way to a scientific outlook of life on this planet; the promised heaven ought to be made to appear in however humble a form on this solid earth. As the meeting-place of diverse faiths, here is afforded a centre and an opportunity for the rearing of an edifice of an ethical code for national and international life, verifiable by experience and moulded by scientific knowledge.

Religious experience is no exception to analytical treatment, however much Prof. Otto wished it should be otherwise. Behind the different masks of diverse faiths the same face is hidden. It is the face of man. The young sciences of anthropology, sociology, and comparative religion yield results far more sacred in human history than the cults of a million gods ever gave. Theological professors may become hysterical at the name of comparative religion but those were not irreligious materialists that saw through ages of human life and drew out details of the history of the earth, and man on it. The real saints and seers are they, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Einstein and Darwin,

the Manus of the age that shaped society to advantage, Bentham, Mill, Hume and the rest of them that command attention. The new creative activity that theology hopes will reinforce the foundation of religion would, if permitted to have its way, tend to confuse Indian life worse than it did in the past, and leaving Prof. Rudolf Otto one cannot do better than revert to the "Crux of the Indian Problem" which reads: "It is not by any so-called purification of religion that permanent progress can be attained. It is only by lessening the hold of religion and increasing the hold of reason and common sense that the problem of communal strife in India can effectively be solved."

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

BRAHMANISM

It is a feeling shared by many that the Brahmins have outwitted the rest of their co-religionists for centuries and have used their position to perpetuate various superstitions. But this number is very small, and even today, nine-tenths of the Hindoos look upon the Brahmin as next to the deity. This belief has prevented the intellectual progress of the Hindus.

Brahmanism is nothing but a crafty profession under the guise of Religion and has the knack of appearing under false pretences. It is gross and sexual, and yet appears refined and spiritual. It is vicious and crooked and yet pretends to be moral; worldly and yet seems religious. Such a system should be destroyed ruthlessly for the very spirit of Brahmanism is inimical to the good of humanity. It represents a feudal form of capitalism under the guise of religion and exploits the wealth of the rich under the form of *Daksina* which is the life-force of Brahmanism.

According to Manu, mankind is divided by God into four castes, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and the Shudras, the first being born from the mouth of God, the second from His arms, the third from His thigh, and the fourth from His feet. Hence the Brahmins are considered to be the highest race of mankind, and the Shudras the lowest. The first three are called the high-born while Shudras are called the low-born. From the modern economic point of view, the Kshatriyas (the warrior class) and the Vaishyas (the

Banias or the merchant class as well as the agriculturists), both belong to the capitalist class while the Shudras are the labourers, though in fact, the Shudras are being religiously treated as nothing more than slaves and even often as animals. It is thus evident that the shrewd Brahmins have created, organised and perpetuated the caste system for their own self-interest. They have been able to impose this belief by dint of their learning and intellectual supremacy over the masses in ancient India. The modern caste-system which is a web of eighteen hundred castes is a gross caricature of the original caste-system to which the mathematical rule of permutations and combinations was applied by the followers of Manu, I mean the ascending and the descending scale of inter-caste marriages as described to a certain extent in the Code of Manu, (Chap Tenth.) Yet I may state that the orthodox Hindus are in modern times vehemently opposed to the inter-caste marriages simply because of their ignorance of the Scriptures. However, they must sooner or later realize the fact that one of the existing eighteen hundred inter-castes, of whom they might be a part, can only be the result of inter-caste marriages among their ancestors. I am of opinion that castes owe their existence not to trades but the contrary, for trades have been assigned by Manu to various castes produced by the inter-caste marriages.

Whether the principle of the *Dakshina* was thrust upon the existing religious rites, such as the

Yagna, the Saradha, etc., which have since become the perpetual gold-mines to the Brahmins, or whether they created such various rites for the sake of getting the *Dakshina* is a problem for the research student. Probably certain rites existed long before the principle of the *Dakshina* was thrust upon them, and then finding the new method very profitable, the Brahmins naturally created various rites for various occasions. Time passed on. Charvka, the founder of the materialistic school, who was nearly a contemporary of Manu is inclined to the latter theory that rites were created for the sake of the *Dakshina*. He says:-

"The costly rites enjoined for those who die

Are a mere means of livelihood devised,

By sacerdotal cunning—nothing more.

The three composers of the triple Veda

Were rogues, or evil spirits or buffoons",

Thus the Brahmins sought wealth from the two rich castes, viz., the Kshatriyas and the Vaishiyas. In order to cajole these rich castes, Manu prohibited the Brahmins from taking gifts from the lowly Shudras. Generally, the Shudras lived at the point of starvation and therefore could, not afford to pay anything. If however, any Shudra was found possessing money or property, the Brahmins had the religious right of snatching away anything they liked from him without being ever punished by the King.

Manu was wise enough to flatter the Kshatriyas, the ruling race, whose protection the Brahmins ever sought by proclaiming that a King is divine, and next in degree to the Brahmin and by granting them preferential rights and responsibilities. Similarly the Vaishyas were given preferential rights and responsibilities over the Shudras. For instance, take the question of punishment for one and the same crime. Brahmins generally got scot-free or sometimes paid a nominal fine, a Kshatriya paid twice that amount as fine, a Vaishya paid four times, and a Shudra, the poorest of all, paid eight times,

A Shudra gets the greatest punishment of all in every case, "because, he is born from the feet of Brahma" (VIII 270), while a Brahmin gets the least punishment in every case, simply because he is born from the mouth of Brahma. As for education of the Shudras, Manu considers it a sin to teach them the Vedas!

All the social evils, prevailing in modern Hindu society, are ultimately traceable to the preaching of the Brahmins whose supreme authority is "the Code of Manu". It is then clear that there can be no real reform in Hindu society until the evil genius of Brahmanism is crushed.

Let us now take a few concrete examples in order to show the pernicious results of Brahmanism. At present there are six crores of human beings in India who are branded by this cult as Shudras or depressed classes and who, consequently, have been living a dog's life since times im-

memorial. Manu puts the dogs and the untouchables, nay, even the Shudras (the labour class) in the same category and looks down upon both the classes as the meanest creatures.

Dire punishment is threatened to any one who insults the dignity of a Brahman.

"A man, threatening to beat a Brahman with a stick in this world, shall wander in Hell *for one hundred years.*" (IV 165).

"A man, striking a Brahman through anger even with a piece of grass, shall be born a dog after death *for twenty one times* continuously. (IV. 166)

"He who merely threatens to assail a Brahman with intent to kill him shall continue in Hell *for one hundred years* and he who actually strikes him, *for one thousand years.* (XI 206).

"As many particles of dust as the blood of a Brahman absorbs from the soil, *so many thousands of years* must the shedder of that blood abide in Hell". (XI 207).

Here is an example in arithmetics for a school-boy: (it must be noted that Manu means this punishment not metaphorically but literally);—if Z wounds a Brahman from whom an ounce of blood is shed thereby, and if so much blood absorbs 10,000 particles of dust, how many years would he abide in Hell? Answer; 10,000,000 years.

It is strange to note that Manu not being satisfied with the aforesaid punishments to the assaulters on the divine Brahmins, set forth additional punishments to be meted out to them in this world also, as follows;—

"If any person, other than a Brahmin, knowingly injures a Brahmin, he shall be tortured by various weapons and killed by the King." (IX 248).

Here are a few "Sacred Laws" of Manu to show the inequality before Law;—

"If a Brahman is beaten with a the hand by a Shudra, his hand it shall be cut off, and if with a leg, then shall it be cut off as a punishment". (VIII 280).

"If a Shudra dares with pride to sit on the same seat with a Brahmin, he shall be expelled (by the King) from the country after branding his waist or otherwise his hips (with which he sat) shall be cut off". (VIII. 281).

"If ever a Shudra spits on a Brahmin with pride, his lips shall be cut off; if he makes water on a Brahmin, his organ shall be cut off; if he breaks wind on a Brahmin, his anus shall be cut off. (VIII 282).

HINDU.

(To be Continued)

Mr. Gandhi And God.

Mr. Gandhi has made a gramophone record, and he has declined to take any payment for it. He has evidently not picked up the Western idea in these matters. Part of his record is as follows:—

I do perceive that whilst everything around me is everchanging, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds altogether, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God; and since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

Mr. Gandhi calls the phenomenon of change God; it would get us just as far if he called it X or Mesopotamia.

"Free-Thinker"

(All mystics, not Mr. Gandhi alone, call the Cosmical energy, God. What form this God has, they do not care to define. Some profess to love this God. How one can love an impersonal energy it is hard to understand.

Ed. "Reason")

Man With A Tail.

There is a new shock in store for the tribe of Tennessee Fundamentalists, who refuse to believe that man had an ape-like ancestor.

The Java ape-man skull, the Pilt-down skull from Sussex, the skull of the Peking man dug up on Chicken Bone Hill, and many other prehistoric relics have satisfied the scientists, but the Fundamentalists always want to know what man has done with his tail.

"If he is descended from a monkey," they say, "show us his tail."

Mr. Joseph McCabe now shows them a man with his tail:

The man with a tail lives in Honolulu, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. He has a tail a foot long. He not only has a tail, but he is proud of his tail, and has been photographed, with tail complete. Mr. McCabe has the photograph.

Mr. McCabe makes this statement in a learned but graphic new book.

"The New Science and the Story of Evolution," just published (Hutchinson, 7s 6d.), in which he tells the story of the universe according to the generally accepted scientific theories, and describes man's progress from the "primordial globule," of which W. S. Gilbert made good fun, down to the present day.

Mr. McCabe insists that there is no such thing as a "law of progress" but that man has developed through a process of trial and error, and of adaption to circumstances.

As for man's future, Mr. McCabe says that we are already losing our hair, and that we may in time lose all of it and become hairless animals and we may also lose our external ears while keeping our hearing apparatus inside the head.

He suggests that as there are many millions of years to come in which human life may be possible on this earth, there is time for almost inconceivable developments, and he thinks that if in the course of untold ages the air outside the earth become too cold, or too something else, man will by that time have found out how to

live inside the earth, perhaps miles down, making plentiful supplies of oxygen to keep his air supply pure and sufficient, and living on foods made up in the laboratory.

As for other words, Mr. McCabe holds that there may well be hundred of thousands of other planets in the universe capable of supporting life, although not necessarily life at the same stage of development as on earth.

"The Daily Mail."

Chinese Proverbs.

Who trust too many often ends

By losing trust in all.

Lend not your pillars to your
friends

Or else your roof may fall.

Make friends with merchants
and your wealth will grow.

Make friends with nobles and
your wealth will go.

Make friends with boors and
learn to use your fists.

Make friends with priests and
sign subscription lists.

God's Own Portion.

Free will Offering Scheme.

1. COR. XVI, 2:—

*"By the first day of the week let everyone
of you lay by him in store as God
hath prospered him."*

"This Scheme is not a new idea. It is working in a great many parishes amongst which is our own Cathedral of Bombay.

The purpose of the Scheme is to enable you to give to God a share of your money and to help you to do this of your own free will and regularly, without the assistance of the Church Collecting Book or the Peon.

If you join the Scheme, you should first fill in the attached slip and return it to the Chaplain. You should fill in the amount you are prepared to give each month, over and above what you give in collections in church. You will not be asked to give to the Collecting Book as well, so that if you are a subscriber to the Collecting Book your subscription can be transferred to the free will Offering Scheme and you can put down that amount in the attached slip, unless you are prepared to increase it which would be better still. If you are not a subscriber at present do not be afraid to put down even a small amount, if it is all that you can really afford.

If you join this scheme you will be given 12 small envelopes enclosed in one big one. One envelope is meant to last one month and you put in every week what is necessary to make up the monthly total you have promised to give. On the first Saturday of each month you bring your envelope and hand it either to the Chaplain or else drop it in the Free Will Offering Box which will be placed in the Church Porch.

You will also be given a number. A register will be kept in the Church of all who join. Your envelope will bear your number on it, so that, what.

you bring in it will be credited to your number in the register. The amounts received and the numbers will be published in the Diocesan Magazine but the names will not be given. They will be known only by the Treasurer and not by anybody else. I hope that you will join this scheme even if you can only give few annas every month. It is our bounden duty as Christians to give a

portion of our earnings back again to God."

KENNETH C. MCPERSON

Chaplain.

(The present economic depression does not affect men alone. God also is profoundly hit. Small wonder that he also must establish an Income Tax Office and appoint his Ministers as Income Tax Collectors.

ED. REASON.)

THE PARALYSIS OF PIETY

I don't care the value of a brass button whether Edison, or Bradlaugh, or Foote did or did not believe in Christianity before they died. And the kind of man who will go on believing in a God because on his death-bed someone told him that Edison thought there might be one, is quite safe from anything that I or any other Free-thinker may do. He will never cease to be religious, and being what he is, he is probably less of a nuisance in a church or chapel than he would be out of it. After all, even fools have a right to some bit of ground they may call their own; and a man of that stamp stands as one of God's children, and nothing that one can do for him or to him will ever accomplish more than to change the form of his stupidity.

My personal interest is in the man who is horrified at the watch story, or who finds himself convinced that there is a God, or believes in the resurrection of Jesus because someone who was trained a Christian reverts to his infantile beliefs just before death. These men interest me only as studies in mental pathology, or as illustrative types of undeveloped humanity.

When the domesticated dog wishes to lie down before a fire in a modern dining-room, he tramps round and round before settling down with a satisfied grunt. It is a survival from the time when the wild dog trampled the grass in order to be sure that nothing dangerous was concealed therein. So with men. Long ago crouching in their forest lairs they shivered and shook before the wizardry of their medicine-man, and carried about them to their death the mental scars caused by their education. The years roll by, the forest clearing gives place to the cathedral or the chapel, the medicine-man to the priest, the congregation sings hymns to the music of an organ, instead of droning songs to the beating of a tom-tom. But the type remains substantially unchanged. It is the primitive, incurious, unreflective, mentally timid type unchanged in all its essentials. They can be seen on all sides, more numerous than many believe, and highly resistant to genuine improvement. *And each one of them has a vote.*

CHAPMAN COHEN.

in Free Thinker.

THE TORCH BEARERS

4. JULIEN LAMETTRIE.

The storming of the Bastille on the 14th of July 1789, by the people of Paris was not a mere political event in the history of France. It was a world event. The Bastille was more than a fortress made of brick and mortar to harbour innocent victims of the French aristocracy: it was the prison of the Mind. It symbolised the enslavement of the human mind and its destruction set free not a few miserable skeletons from its bowels but the very human Mind from the dogmas of the ruling classes and the clergy.

The common man who formerly *passively accepted* everything which he was told, began to *doubt the question, to inquire* himself. This love or the *inherent virtue of free inquiry* led him to the testing of institutions social, political, moral, and religious. And he woke up to find that these were built on sand, the foundations were hollow and could not survive the test of free inquiry. Reason would not accept them. He decided to accept nothing which was not acceptable to the newly enthroned goddess of Reason.

Were the events of 1789 the work of some mad gang of conspirators who gloated in destruction and chaos or was the revolution the natural outcome of free inquiry into the foundations of the ancient regime? If the latter, and the verdict of all the unprejudiced observers is for it,

then who was responsible for instilling this love for free inquiry in the common man, who for centuries was content to accept passively, to submit without resistance and to believe his masters?

Les Philosophes—is the unanimous answer of the French literary history. The writings of Lamettrie, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, d'Alembert and other advocates of reform in Church and State, awakened the common man from the lethargy of the ages and established the reign of Reason and Freedom in place of belief, faith, and submission.

There are few countries in the world to-day where the need of free inquiry in institutions and beliefs is greater than in our priest-ridden and foreign-ruled country. And perhaps it will help us in our task to know something of how these French philosophers worked and what they thought. In the following lines I propose to give a short account of the life and work of Lamettrie, not just because he is the least known of these thinkers even to our intellectuals, but because, in my opinion, all others are his direct descendents and chiefly because he preferred the scientific method to the literary one in his history.

II

Julien Offray de Lamettrie was born of Catholic parents at St. Malo on Dec. 23rd 1709. His parents wanted to make him a

priest and he studied theology in the Jansenist schools for some years. But this was not to his liking and he suddenly decided to adopt the profession of medicine. In 1733 he went to Leyden to study medicine under Boerhaave, who was known as the Batavian Hippocrates and an encyclopaedia of learning. This teacher of Lamettrie was an extraordinary character. Besides being the founder of the Eclectic School in medicine and a clinician, he was a good chemist and a prolific writer. His *Elementa chemie* and his *Institutions* were read all over Europe and were even translated into Turkish and Arabic. Many anecdotes are known about his habit of making monarchs wait and his reputation is said to have reached even as far as China. He was a philosopher and a great lover of music, frequently assembling performers at his house. Under such a master Lamettrie received a liberal education, not only in medical subjects but in all branches of natural history and philosophy.

In 1742, Lamettrie returned to Paris where he obtained the post of surgeon to the Guards. During an attack of fever he made observations on himself with reference to the action of the quickened circulation upon thought which lead him to the conclusion that psychical phenomena were to be accounted for as the effects of organic changes in the brain and nervous system. This conclusion he worked out in his earliest philosophic work, *Histoire naturelle de l'ame*—*The natural history of the Soul*,

which appeared in 1745. The book contained many plain statements which were very unpleasant to the Jesuits and the devout believers. There was a great outcry against the author and he had to flee to Leyden. Undaunted by the popular indignation he developed his doctrines still more boldly and completely, and with great originality, in *L'homme—machine* *Man a Machine* which appeared in 1748. The publication of this book created a sensation and all the forces of the church were up in arms against its poor author. The clergy of Leyden united to hound him out and he had to take refuge at the court of Frederick the Great of Prussia, who, a sceptic himself, was a great patron of unfortunate sceptics and philosophers. He welcomed Lamettrie at his court, made him a court physician, gave him a pension and got him elected a member of the Academy of Sciences, Berlin. Similarly this great monarch gave refuge to Voltaire from the fury of the church, a little later.

During the next three years he wrote *Discours sur le bonheur, la volupté, et l'art de jouir*, in which he expounded his philosophy of atheism and pleasures of the senses. Like *Charvaka* of our country, who is little read and much abused, he preached the doctrine of *jalam tyoja, ghur-tam piba*. It is said he died while putting his philosophy in practice, the cause of his death being an excess of pheasant pastry!

Man a Machine caused great stir throughout Europe and the same year (1748) saw the publication of an

answer to it under the title of: "*Man More than a Machine*."—In answer to a wicked and atheistical Treatise, written by Mons. de Lamettrie and entitled *Man a Machine*". The book was published at Leyden anonymously and it was believed for sometime that Lamettrie himself wrote this answer as a joke. Besides this, there were other books published in refutation of Lamettrie's book. These were Frontzen's *Denial of Man a Machine*, (1749), Tralle's *On Man's Machine and Soul* (1749), and Hollmann's *Refutation of Man a Machine* (1750).

In 1926, exactly 178 years after the original publication of Lamettrie, Sig. Eugenio Rignano, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Milan, thought it fit to answer the French physician, in a book entitled: "*Man Not a Machine, a Study of the Finalistic Aspects of Life*". This pamphlet of the Italian professor roused Joseph Needham, a Cambridge biologist of repute, to defend the thesis of Lamettrie which he did in a forceful and effective manner in a pamphlet entitled: "*Man a Machine—In answer to a romantic and unscientific treatise written by Sig. Eugenio Rignano entitled Man not a Machine*," (1927.)

What was in the book of Lamettrie to arouse such wild controversy which has continued to our time? The title page of the English translation of Lamettrie's book published in 1750 reads as follow:

M A N
A
M A C H I N E
Wherein.

The several systems of Philosophers, in respect to the Soul of Man, are examined;

The different states of the Soul are shown to be co-relative to those of the Body;

The diversity between Men and other Animals, is proved to arise from the different Quantity and Quality of Brains;

The LAW OF NATURE is explained, as relative to the whole Animal Creation;

The Immateriality of an Inward Principle is by Experiments and Observations exploded,
and

A full Detail is given of the several Springs which move the HUMAN MACHINE.

This was the thesis of Lamettrie. Joseph Needham gives an excellent summary of Lamettrie's arguments which I cannot resist quoting in full.

"Lamettrie began his book by insisting that experiment and observation alone ought to guide us in approaching the nature of life. *A priori* reasoning should be abandoned; 'Methinks', says Lamettrie, 'I hear a peripatetic, who says to me, You must not credit the experiments of Torricelli, for if we believe them, we banish the horror of a vacuum, and then what a shocking philosophy shall we have.'"

Lamettrie goes on to enumerate a large number of cases in which, from the common sense point of view, it cannot be denied that the soul is affected by the state of the body. The effects of disease upon the understanding, the resemblance of sleep and death, the mental well-being

produced by food and the corresponding results of the lack of it—in such instances, he traces the supremacy of the material body....He is fond of bringing out special cases of persons such as the magistrate Monsieur Steigner of Wittighofen in Switzerland; this gentleman was, when fasting, the most upright and merciful judge, but woe to the wretch who came before him when he had made a hearty dinner; he was then, disposed to hang everybody, the innocent as well as the guilty".

From this we may trace a direct line to modern researches such as those of Sherrington, from which it appears that all our actions may be some day described as reflex. The afferent fibres coming in to the central nervous system from the sense organs at the periphery of the body interlace everywhere with the efferent fibres going out and conveying the impulses to the muscles and other effector organs. There is no gap; there is no physiological evidence for a seat of the soul.

Lamettrie further discusses the brains of man and of animals and decides that there and there alone resides man's superiority. He asserts with confidence that the transition from animals to man is in no way violent, a biological truth that was destined to wait at least another century for general acceptance.

In some passages of great charm, Lamettrie pleads as a result of his theories for greatest mercy in dealing with criminals and a more humane treatment of mental disease. Speaking of puerperal insanity, he says:

Of these mad women, one of them was broken on the wheel and burnt, and another was buried alive. I am sensible that the interest of society requires all this rigour. But however, it is much to be wished that we had none for judges, but the most skilful physicians. They alone could distinguish the guilty from the innocent. What occasion is there to have recourse to fabulous stories, as an honest Pope himself frankly confessed, to add still more torture to those unhappy criminals that are about to perish as if they had not suffered sufficiently from the sting of their own conscience?

The questions of the existence of God and of personal immortality Lamettrie lays aside after some discussion of them, adapting for himself an agnostic position: these he considered as questions impossible to answer. Actually he was not interested in them; the natural philosophy of life was what attracted him, and he was content to leave those other questions in a condition of doubt.

I give a few more quotations to illustrate the caustic of our author.

"Fish have big heads, indeed, but void of sense as are the heads of a greater part of mankind!"

"I cannot help thinking that man is sufficiently punished who has had the misfortune not to be virtuous."

"Experiments and observation alone ought to guide us. These we find in abundance in the writing of such physicians as were philosophers, and not in those philosophers who were unacquainted with physic

The former have explored and unravelled the labyrinth of Man. They alone, have discovered to us those hidden springs concealed under a cover which hides from us so many many wonders. They alone in a philosophical contemplation of the soul half a thousand times have surprised it in its mystery and grandeur without despising it in one of these condition or idolising it in the other. Once more I will be bold to say, these are the only authors that have a right to speak on this subject. What would the lame philosopher say, and above all, the divines? Is it not ridiculous to hear them determine

without modesty on a subject they have never been qualified to examine thoroughly? A subject from which they have been always diverted by dark idle studies that have tinctured them with a thousand gross childish prejudices, and to say all in one word have plunged them head over heels in fanaticism which adds still to their ignorance of the mechanism of bodies."

Some plain speaking this in the eighteenth century and no wonder its author had to flee the country to escape the wrath of the divines.

N. D. PATEL.

PARSI FANATICISM.

It is a real misfortune to the Parsi community that it is so very influential in the City of Bombay and Western India. The Press is largely under its control. Hence its social vices are rarely exposed. The superstitions in which it grovels are commented upon only in some Gujarati paper or other. And even these are furiously attacked when they act the role of the critic.

I respect a thorough-going, honest bigot. I respect for instance, a Musulman Ghazi who expects to go to Heaven by killing unbelievers. I respect the Thugs who honestly believe that human sacrifices to Kali are what their religion enjoined on them. But as a Parsi, I detest those, who at heart have not the faintest regard for what they call religion, but who are the first to strike a blow at reformers, in order to gain the cudos of the

ignorant who count among them some of the millionaires. The insensate row deliberately created at the Royal Opera House in Bombay is a case in point. Here was a drama staged by a Hindu in which a Parsi girl had volunteered to take part with the permission of her guardians. The orthodox saw in it a handle for self-glorification. Parsi morals were supposed to have been destroyed! And, of course, religion was in danger. Hence at any cost the drama must not be performed and by sheer brute force they brought it about that the play was not acted. What is more disgraceful, they brought their influence upon the authorities and got the play banned.

Did the authors of this mischief really believe in the tenets of their religion? Did the people really believe that Zoroastrianism was in

danger? Did they believe that it was an assault upon their creed? Nothing of the kind. For, if their religious sentiments were wounded by this play, I can give half a dozen instances of recent occurrences when their righteous indignation should have been aroused if they had any genuine orthodoxy in respect of their religion. The Cama Oriental Institute, presided over by an aged and orthodox priest, has recently issued a volume in which a western scholar translates passages of Avesta by the strict philological methods. Some of these passages assigns nine wives to Lord Ahura Mazda. A Memorial Volume was recently prepared in honour of a Parsi savant. I challenge any orthodox Parsi to study this volume and say that the contents are not outrageous from this standpoint. There are essays on incest as permitted by the Zoroastrians. There are in it essays to prove that the Parsis are fire-worshippers. And there are other articles which would prove really offensive if an expression of offence was a marketable article.

Here the Cama Institute authorities are themselves orthodox; they are very powerful, yet they sulk in silence

By their vulgar, disgraceful and sincere exhibition at the Royal Opera House and by their silence, over the burial of a rich Parsee lady in Poona which should be regarded as cowardly from the orthodox standpoint, the orthodox led by their Theosophic brethren, have shown that so far as a section of the Parsis are concerned, their religion has the value only of a commercial commodity; that they have no true religious zeal and that they prostitute their faith to crass and mundane motives.

M. D. ENGINEER

[Is it not a mistake to believe that because a person has passed some University examinations he or she is expected to be full of wisdom and knowledge? Such a person is generally educated in the particular subjects selected for a degree and in other subjects that person may be as ignorant as the "man in the street". When we talk of Parsee education and culture we must remember this.]

Ed. REASON.

AT THE SECRETARIES' TABLE.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU

This is our wish to all our members and well-wishers. Though it is usual to expect the New Year to be better than the old, yet probably all are not hopeful about 1932. The economic conditions are worsening day by day and to us in this country, the political outlook is anything but hopeful. That is why even the greatest optimist is not over sanguine about the future. Still we wish the best. At no time are good wishes more cheering than when the horizon is cloudy. Whether it is going to be sunshine or rain, Reason and knowledge which have guided us out of the bog of superstition and ignorance will continue to be our guides this year. They will certainly light our days when adversity and bigotry befog them.

REASON IN NEW FORM.

We apologise to our members for the late appearance of "REASON". This is because we have changed the printer which means a fresh declaration which had to be made before the Chief Presidency Magistrate and because he was away on leave this was delayed. It is our earnest desire to make "REASON" as attractive as possible, not only in its general get-up, but also in its contents. We shall be very happy to receive suggestions. As regards the contents, every effort is being made, to improve the same. As we cannot afford to pay our contributors this may keep out the best writers. For the sake of the cause however, it is to be hoped that good writers will favour us with their contributions out of sheer love for the movement.

We cannot fail to make a specific mention of Mr. F. G. Gould, that eminent rationalist of England, who has been good enough to spare time to send us his contributions. Should some of the leaders in India do likewise we would certainly be very rich. Complimentary copies of "REASON" are sent to many eminent Rationalists in India. We should be very happy if they all became members, and contributed articles; if they cannot do both, they could do at least one.

CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION.

The annual general meeting will be held shortly. There is one change in the constitution that seems to us to be rather imperative. At the moment all subscriptions are renewable in January. This may keep back intending members joining at the latter part of the year and when the New Year comes, the eagerness may have died away. The best thing would be to make the subscriptions renewable every twelve months.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

There are still a few members whose subscriptions are in arrears for the last year. Will they be so good as to send their cheque for Rs. 10/- which will include the subscriptions for 1931 and for 1932?

NEW MEMBERS.

The following have joined our Association—; S. G. Laskar, P. Framroze, N. Ganguly, Dr. M. G. Pradhan, Mr. J. S. Warden, Solicitor, Miss. R. F. Vakil, Dr. A. C. Ukil M.D., Dr. H. Ghosh, M.D., N. M. Shah B.A., LL.B., Srimati Aruna Asafali, J. H. Modi, Solicitor, S. D. Desai.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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[Monthly ;

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. Articles are accepted for publication only on condition that they are not sent to any other journal. For further information write to the Hon'y Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

Love thy neighbour as thyself. This is the most important item in the teaching of Christ. Still it is quite common to see this being flouted by his lieutenants on this earth. I have a little girl friend who attends a

convent in the suburbs of Bombay. She is about thirteen, and is a Catholic. In the school, besides the daily dose of Bible and Catechism, she has a weekly "special" in the form of a lecture by the parish priest. True to type, he is very much interested in the lambs of his fold

Priest advises the Young.

and knows more about their personal affairs than is good either for him or for them. He makes no secret of his knowledge and has naturally created in the minds of these girls a revulsion towards him. One evening when I called at my friend's, I found this little girl behaving very differently. I asked her what was the reason. After some hesitation she blurted out—"I can't be a friend of yours any more. Fr..... has warned us against having Muslim, Hindoo or Parsee friends. He says we Catholics must not associate ourselves much with you all, as it is not good for our souls. I know Mrs. Khan, she is not bad, and my friends Soona, and Fatma and Leila are such sporting girls. Yet this Fr... says we must keep off from them. How mean!" She had already forestalled me and had felt that the advice of the holy man was very uncharitable. This is not an exceptional case, nor a rare one. It is quite common in all communal institutions. Leaving aside the bad taste of the priest who could prejudice one section of the school against another, such a teaching leaves behind deep impressions on the tender mind that takes years of mutual friendship to erase. Our present communal trouble in India is nothing else but the result of learning in a reserved compartment, living in a reserved compartment, and working in a reserved compartment,—a spirit that is fostered by all priests. The latter have laid down that religious instructions should be imparted to the young and one of the measures to safeguard the soul is to avoid the occasions of sin by mixing with children of other faiths. It is however gratifying that the religious teacher of the higher classes does not manifest this bias to that extent, perhaps because he is more fully occupied with a

material subject like physics or chemistry while the parish priest has only sectarian religion to think of and that too with a petty mind. This influence of narrow minded and bigoted priests on school-going children, this influence which is the thin end of the wedge which is later on to divide us into small groups, has to be seriously considered by all educationalists who have no bias. Matters are bad enough with our existing prejudices of colour and society. Nobody should be permitted to add one more force which is based on the probability of some of us being birds with wings or animals with horns and tails in the next world. If Catholics and Muslims consider it essential to ground their children in the articles of their faith, they may do so, but on no condition should this process be associated with the planting of a suspicious bias towards all others who do not think like them. In my talk with the parents of the little friend I referred to above, I found that Catholic priests view with great disfavour the act of sending a Catholic child to a non-Catholic school. Though the teaching in some of these convents does not come up to the expectation of the parents, yet they calmly submit to the dictates of the priests as they are afraid of being excommunicated and sent to Hell. For the development of an Indian nation an intimate mixing up with all the communities is very much indicated. Teachers of the type of our friend Fr..... are not a help but a great hindrance to our progress, and therefore should find entrance in no school whatsoever.

* * * *

The month of Ramzan has just ended. Many of my co-religionists were not able to see the moon on Sunday evening

because of the clouds, and were uncertain as to the exact day when the Id was to be celebrated. It is natural-

Muslims ly a source of concern, as
and failure to see the moon
Fasts. means one extra day of fasting. The Prophet has been liberal though, for this is what the Holy Koran says :—

“O, Believers ! a Fast is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may fear God for certain days. But he among you who shall be sick, on a journey, shall fast that same number of other days : and as for those who are able to keep it and yet break it the expiation of it shall be the maintenance of a poor man” In spite of the great latitude that is permitted by the founder, it is a well-known fact that the number of those that do not observe it is daily growing. This is because religion as such, be it Mahomedanism or any other, is slowly losing its hold, and while following the general principles, the followers honour these minute details more in the breach than in the observance. Various religions ask their followers to fast in different ways. Among the Hindoos, whereas fruits etc. are allowed, no rice preparations are permitted. Among the Catholics, the amount of solid food permitted at breakfast and at the night meal is cut down, and a few restrictions as to the nature of the food are imposed. But for the Muslims, the fast has to be very strict during the day and not even saliva can be swallowed, at least so say some of them. In the Koran—“You are allowed on the night of the fast to approach your wives: they are your garment and ye are their garment. God knoweth that ye defraud yourselves therein, so he turneth unto you and forgiveth you ! now, therefore, go in unto them with full desire for

that which God hath ordained for you and eat and drink until ye can discern a white thread from a black thread by the daybreak; then fast strictly till night and go not in unto them, but rather pass the time in the Mosques”. There are certain aspects of this fasting that do not seem to be hygienic. I say this in view of the tendency of the modernist to explain religious injunctions scientifically. First of all, after a complete fast during the day feasting during the night is permitted. There is no limit to what one could eat. A good meal immediately after sunset, a light supper at bedtime, and another fairly heavy meal before sun-rise, ought to satisfy most appetites; even if this does not do so, it can supply sufficient calorie value to carry on with all functions. One of my friends tells me that fasting drains the animal out of him. Why missing one meal at noon and a light tea at four should have this effect I cannot understand. The other drawback is that the juice of the stomach is being constantly secreted, and though the spitting out of saliva will decrease this secretion to some extent, yet there is enough left of it and sufficient time given to it to leave its effects on the mucus membrane of the stomach. Quite a number therefore suffer from headaches and other vague aches. This certainly handicaps them a great deal in carrying out their normal avocations. The other point is that you are permitted to eat and drink till you can discern a white thread from a black thread by day-break. This instruction gives an undue advantage to our brethren in the northern parts of the earth, as here the daybreak is considerably delayed and sunset considerably hastened. Their period of fasting is certainly very small. Probably the Prophet did not foresee the spread of his teachings so far up in the north. Here are oppor-

tunities for men of the type of Kemal Pasha and Amanulla Khan to institute reforms in the observance of this fast. Otherwise, if the progress in aviation should continue at the same rate as now, it is not too much to expect a migration of Muslims further north during these months, for there one can follow the injunctions to the letter without much difficulty. Much as I agree that an occasional fast and daily moderate diet are the royal roads to health, I certainly think that the fasting during the month of Ramzan as is now practised, is detrimental to the health and temper of the person and under modern conditions it is necessary for us to preserve both.

* * * *

Different religious communities follow different methods for the disposal of their dead. Some of these

Hindu methods do leave a great
Funeral deal to be desired. The
Rites. Christians and Muslims

bury their dead, the Parsees offer them to the birds, while the Hindoos, some cremate and the others bury. Except for the Hindoos, the others retain the dead body for a considerable length of time in the home. The Hindoos are in a great hurry, and in the city of Bombay people are cremated even at night. This does not leave sufficient time to inform friends and relatives of the death and deprives these of the chance of offering their last tribute to their friend. Again, on watching the preparations for a Hindoo funeral one feels hurt at the despatch and the niggardliness of the whole affair. Whatever might be the social position of the dead person, he or she is laid over cocoanut leaves tied across two bamboos. Then the body is covered with a sheet and the face disfigured with all sorts of ugly rouge, especially so in the case

of women. After that, the body is fastened with coarse coir rope. Then starts the funeral. Among the uneducated and the poor there is a band which consists of people half drunk with bhang and such things, and shouting in the most discordant manner. With others, the procession is more silent, but is seldom orderly. One of the relatives carries the fire in an earthen pot and is at the head, while others mumble the name of Ram. At the cremation ground, after the corpse has been placed on the wooden pile, the nearest relative sets fire to it with his back to the corpse, and is supposed never to see the corpse again. The rest hang about till they hear the cracking of the skull, after which they all repair to the sea or the temple tank to have a holy bath. Then the period of mourning starts. Among some communities the neighbours and others arrive and every morning repeat a "mourning performance" which consists of false crying and moaning.

It is a misfortune that we cannot preserve indefinitely the bodies of those we love and revere. If this cannot be done, one can at least carry out the disposal in a more dignified manner. Here, I think, my Hindoo friends can well take a lesson from the Christians whose funerals are certainly impressive and solemn, though one need not make them so expensive. Cremation as a mode of disposal of the dead is certainly preferable in a congested city, but it is high time that it is carried out in a more elegant manner. Some years back, there was a move to erect a crematorium in Bombay but nothing is heard of it these days. Again, the idea of the closest relative lighting the funeral pyre with his back to the corpse is certainly revolting. It is true that everyone of us will shrink from that action which means the initiation of the

process that will destroy the physical existence of the person we love. So it is far better to find somebody else for the job, and if it is thought necessary that the nearest relative should carry it out, then let the poor man do it in the way he is prompted to. The post-funeral bath is certainly antiquated as nobody now considers the dead body to be something impure. The custom of the ladies meeting together along with paid mourners and mourning for the dead, is objectionable in every way. It is high time that educated Hindoos set about to reform their funeral rites by agitating for an electric crematorium, for retaining the body in the houses for a longer time, for conveying the body in a coffin, and for the omission of the bath and the post-funeral mourning. Mr. F. E. Dinshaw has set the ball rolling in the Parsee community. I trust that the eminent Hindoos who are members of our Association will give a lead to their community.

* * *

Kemal Pasha has disappointed all his enemies. When he established his government at Angora, many were anxiously waiting to hear of his fall. When he held the political arena successfully they turned with hopes to his experiments with religious reform. Even here he has been a great success. First of all, he managed to dis-establish the church. Then he passed laws regulating priesthood and the exercise of the priestly functions. Now

comes his third reform in ordering the recital of the Koran in the Turkish language. Nothing is more ludicrous than to hear a group of muezzins at a funeral ceremony chanting Koranic verses in their most nasal intonation, or to listen on a Friday evening to a group of Bene-Israelites, old and young, with tweed caps on their heads, singing out of tune, verses from the Hebrew Bible. Most of those do not understand what they say, but they are probably satisfied that God who is an expert linguist, understands all. The same is true of the Parsees who read their prayers in a language not understood by them. Christians have translated their prayers into the language of the country and so most of them do know what they say. Since prayer is a means of self-hypnosis, it is very necessary that its implication should be understood by the party. Lenin said that religion is the opium of the people. Mustapha Kemal probably also thinks likewise. If, at the moment, he is not able to bring up his people without this drug, he is at least anxious that they should understand the formula they employ in lulling themselves into peace and satisfaction. In this there is one hope. When you understand something, you are able to criticise it. I hope that with the wider distribution of the Turkish Koran, people in that country will revise their value of the sacred books of the east.

ALI AKBAR.

SAINTS AND FAKIRS.*

India is infested with saints, sadhus, sanyasis, fakirs and other religious charlatans too numerous to mention. One meets them at every corner. The mentality of the uneducated Indian masses forms a particularly favourable environment for them to flourish in. They are privileged beggars and cannot be treated with contempt. For most of them lay claim to supernatural power and if they condescend to beg, it is only to provide the faithful with the opportunity to practise the noble virtue of Charity.

The respect that is usually accorded to them does not depend on their religious elevation, whatever that may mean, since a Hindu will respect a Mahomedan fakir as much as a Hindu Sadhu or a Christian saint. All these have one common characteristic. The way to become a sadhu or fakir is to display some eccentricity of dress or behaviour. This produces an impression that these people are, in some occult way, superior to the common run of mortals and being on intimate terms with God, can arrange interviews with him or even induce him to listen to prayers and change his divine intentions accordingly. Of course you can choose your eccentricity to suit your nature. You may for instance lengthen your shirt into a robe long enough to cover all your sins, or perhaps reduce your clothing or give it up altogether like Jain Munis. You may grow your hair and beard to extraordinary lengths or shave it off altogether. You may decorate your body in various ways or go about with a serpent coiled round your neck if you have the nerve. If you are an educated man with

university qualifications, you can assume a Sanscrit or a Latin name if your own is not sonorous enough to make any impression. A Sadhu with a university degree is immediately pounced upon by religious people as a proof of the worthlessness of modern knowledge and the vast superiority of ancient lore.

It is a patent fact that nothing produces such a universal impression as eccentricities in dress or outward behaviour. Without attributing any motives, it can hardly be denied that a great deal of the vast influence acquired by such distinguished personalities as Mrs. Besant and Mahatma Gandhi is due to this factor, which of course does not mean that they have not many excellent qualities.

Eccentricity in itself is not a thing to be condemned wholesale, because no change of any kind would ever be made if there was nobody eccentric enough to introduce it, and there can be no progress without change. But a change adopted with a genuine desire for reform can be easily distinguished from one adopted to give an impression of superiority. In the first case, imitation is welcome, in the second it is not. Jain Munis do not wish everybody to go naked, because that would diminish their importance, nor would matted locks mean anything if everybody had them.

In spite of the doubtful ways in which Sadhus acquire their influence, it must be admitted that there are good sadhus and bad ones. And if it comes to that, are not politicians known often to acquire influence in more than doubtful ways?

* Mr. KARVE' WINS the Fifty Rupees Prize offered by the Association.

The lust for domination is so ingrained in human nature that it often underlies public exhibitions of humility. We may condemn it, but we must admit that it is practically impossible to eradicate it. The crucial test therefore lies in the use that is made of the influence so acquired. The well-known Saints of Maharashtra were certainly well intentioned people, whatever the actual result of their activities may have been. Some of them were not only excellent poets, though their poetry was mostly religious, but even social reformers in their own way. Some of them disapproved of caste distinctions and behaved accordingly. But, as in the case of Mahatma Gandhi, even their followers never accepted their teachings in this respect, because to them it was merely another eccentricity, permissible only to Saints, never to ordinary mortals. This was the direct result of the importance they gave to religion, which always includes all current superstitions. People will worship Saints and Mahatmas, will even build temples to them, but never imitate them. The sins of a Saint may be cancelled by his merits in the religious code, but to ordinary people, they are sins still. This is why the total effect of the life of even a good Saint is on the whole never good.

These good Saints are however in a very small minority. Most of them tend to misuse their easily acquired power. The petty saints indulge in petty deceits, the abler ones acquire a large following, consisting largely of women, as Saints are mostly men, for religion is more often connected with sex attraction than religious people ever dream of. One married saint in particular, an educated man who persuaded his wife to join him in fakirism, has been known

to announce to his followers that a favoured female disciple of his had been his wife in previous lives, and consequently had the right to live with him in this life. Whether the wife who was already married to him had anything to say about it, is not known. More often, however, their role of saints obliges them to pretend indifference to all worldly matters. But, of course, this supposed indifference itself can be turned to good account. Since luxury and poverty are the same to them, why should they wound the feelings of their followers who are so anxious to maintain them in luxury? So they condescend to accept everything that comes their way, fine clothes, first class travel, succulent food, unless the pretence of living without food is part of the dodge. Again, just for the spiritual uplift and salvation of their fair followers, they accept their personal attendance and services such as massage, if nothing more. In any case, those of them who are not sexually abnormal are certainly not starved in this matter any more than in food.

The profession of a sadhu seems to come more naturally to a man than to a woman, who often lacks the initiative. A man becomes a sadhu as a woman may become a prostitute, merely choosing the most convenient way of earning a living, and the man has this advantage over a prostitute, that there is no Social Purity League to hound him out of the town, nor any Prevention of Fakirism Act.

The modern variety of fakir is a spiritualist, who however requires a confederate, usually a woman, to act as a supposed medium. It is difficult to understand why living on the earnings of a medium is not a crime. It should really be a much greater one than living on the

earnings of a prostitute, since the latter serves some useful purpose and need not be dishonest, while the medium is a cheat if she is not an idiot or insane. Most mediums have been proved to be cheats, but some idiots will still believe that they are honest when they are not found out.

A priest is a nuisance, but even he renders some service to religious people, but a saint is merely a parasite.

A saint or sadhu is supposed to have his passions under perfect control, yet some of them fly into a rage if you do not bend low enough to salute them. A friend once induced me to visit one and as a matter of politeness, I saluted him as I would an equal, but would not for a moment think of touching his feet as other people were doing. He immediately started pouring a volley of filthy abuse against everything modern. The faithful followers of a saint will even drink the water in which his feet have been washed, or which runs out when he is bathing. No wonder they get all kinds of diseases and stick to him all the more in the hope of being cured. I have known well-to-do people squandering any amount of money on sadhus of this type and leaving their children in penury. Of course religious people are under no moral obligation to look after their children. God is supposed to do that, while they prefer to look after sadhus, whom apparently God cannot look after.

These so-called unworldly sadhus accumulate vast estates and their heirs fight for the inheritance in mundane courts. Even religious heads of different sects have been known to do it. Poverty is only a pretence. The sufferings of a saint principally arise from the pretence

that his wants are few and under perfect control. This is sometimes inconvenient, as saints are often surrounded by the faithful who will give them no peace, but after all they cannot watch all the time, and a saint can always claim a few hours privacy if desirable, on the pretence of religious meditation. It may be uncomfortable to be naked if the weather is really cold, but sadhus can always smear ash all over the body. This orthodox form of toilet powder serves the same purpose as the modern form and protects the skin quite well from the inclemencies of the weather.

One class of saints or sadhus consists of perfectly harmless idiots, whose natural eccentricities make them saints without any pretence. If they have hallucinations, so much the better, as that gives them a religious status. In short, anybody can become a sadhu if so inclined, with a little natural idiocy or cunning.

Is there any remedy for this state of things? The only remedy is obviously to try to change the environment, the gullible mentality of the multitude, without which these gentry would be like fish out of water. The only way to effect the change is the right kind of education, meaning mostly scientific education, for it is only in scientific subjects that the mind is trained to ask the reason why. In literary subjects one has very often to accept things without question, like rules of grammar for instance. The only training which will be useful against saints and fakirs is scientific training. Let us therefore fight with all our energy for scientific education.

R. D. KARVE.

THE BOASTFUL CHURCH.

Its Rise and Decline.

All religions, past and present, have claimed to be of divine origin. None, however, has been more boastful than the Roman Catholic Church which claims not only such an origin, but proudly asserts that it is founded on a rock and against it the powers of 'darkness' shall not prevail, an assertion that can only impress credulous folk. Till recently, that Church could maintain this bold claim, especially among the imperfectly educated and the credulous who implicitly believed all its stories. Today, it is clear to all but the prejudiced and the biassed, that it has lost its hold on mankind and that it is rapidly sinking under the weight of knowledge.

Though it has existed for nineteen hundred years, and has, therefore, a long history behind it, a brief survey of its career and progress will show that its claim to be progressive and to be a divinely founded institution is utterly untenable. To begin with, it came into existence when strange problems of religion occupied the mind of the people that were destined to hear its message. The world was then steeped in ignorance, and people held curious beliefs about the relation of supernatural beings with mankind and the place of their future abode in the Universe. These beliefs existed long before Christianity came into existence and favoured its reception. People found nothing absurd that a God should take human form to sacrifice himself to redeem his own creatures who were tainted with some imaginary sins for which they were not responsible. Virgin mothers, incarnate gods, dying gods, and evil ones with

malignant influences were common features of pre-Christian beliefs. Long before Christianity came into existence, people were very familiar with the idea of vicarious punishments and sacrifices and were, therefore, neither shocked nor surprised when the missionaries from the east taught these doctrines and proclaimed Jesus to be an incarnated god, who had just died for the redemption of mankind. Certain other features of the new religion also appealed to the downtrodden masses whose lives were oppressed by humiliating class distinctions, injustice, slavery and serfdom. The idea of a common brotherhood and fatherhood in God, the temporary nature of our existence on earth and an eternal one in heaven where all grievances would be redressed and full justice assured, was very welcome and gained the new religion many converts. Christianity, therefore, was assured of a favourable reception and despite the opposition it encountered for sometime from the established religions and other vested interests of the time, it gained a firm foothold among the downtrodden proletariat.

It has been represented that Christianity had to contend against severe odds in the form of bitter persecution and that it was only the divine assistance that it received that enabled it to come out victorious. In this there is a great deal of exaggeration which has been invented to sustain the divine claim. Persecutions there have been, but certainly not of the magnitude as represented in Church history. During its own career

the Catholic Church has persecuted its opponents far more violently than it was itself ever subjected to in its early stages. In less than four hundred years after its origin it had secured imperial favours and protection, and by the year one thousand it had become a power to reckon with and Europe was already groaning under its sway. So powerful was the church then, that the Pope claimed to be above emperors and kings, insisted on obedience from them and demanded tribute. He could lay a kingdom under interdict and woe to the prince who dared to dispute his authority. The Church was then at the zenith of its power. At that moment, Europe was wrapped in ignorance, people thought in terms of religion and superstitions, and priests regulated the lives of individuals. A well-known writer has described this period as one of intense intellectual darkness, when people lived in filth and faith, animated by fierce passions and cruel dispositions. They lived in a supernatural world, haunted by devils and ghosts from whom they could be protected only by priests. The same writer compares Christendom to a lunatic asylum with priests as keepers. The most absurd theological question, such as whether Christ had one or two natures, interested Christendom passionately and the fathers of the Church were the greatest authorities on any subject.

The first blow that the Church received came with the rupture with the Eastern Church of which the present Orthodox Church is an offshoot. The second was the disillusionment that came from the Crusades. Despite the assurance of fanatical preachers and organisers, these Crusades failed to accomplish their mission. The infidels had the better of the

affair. Though heretical bodies cropped up here and there, and in some cases even made some progress, the Church could always suppress them with a strong hand. Intolerance and persecution being the policy of the Church, no thinker dared to express his views boldly. The views of the Church, therefore, held the field as the only undisputed ones and people had to believe in them. Meanwhile, corruption and depravity increased in the Church until some of the clergy becoming alarmed, attempted to effect reforms. This was successfully achieved by Martin Luther. The result was the great schism that cost the Church millions of adherents. The whole of Northern Europe went over to the Reformed Church which came into existence after this schism. This was a fatal blow from which the Church never recovered, though we are told, from time to time, that people are now returning in great numbers to the "true church." It is even predicted that Protestant England will soon be converted to Catholicism! The Reformation put an end to the intolerable and arrogant sway of the Catholic Church. It was only after this that it became possible for thinkers and philosophers to give their naked opinions to the world. Enlightenment began to spread and people lost their fear of the priest. Voltaire and the Encyclopedists broke the intellectual fetters imposed by the priests on France. From that country intellectual light began to spread all over Europe.

Science till now, had occupied a very humble position. The science of astronomy alone was advanced, but not sufficiently enough to dispute the incorrect teachings of the church regarding God, man and the universe. The Church got seriously

alarmed when Galileo, Bruno and Copernicus, basing their opinion on astronomical findings, explained to the rest the position of our planet earth in this universe and its relation to the other heavenly bodies, as this teaching went directly against its own. But no sooner they realised that the masses were not likely to understand these difficult questions and change their opinions, the rulers of the Church affected a broad tolerance and the panic subsided. It was, however, reserved for the 19th century to shatter completely the pretensions of this Church and to show that Christianity is one of the many superstitions that have held the minds of men. The knowledge of biology, geology, astronomy, anthropology, chemistry, ethnology and other sciences has thrown a flood of light on the composition of matter and the universe, the place of our planet in this universe, the origin of the earth, the nature and origin of man, the origin of religion and of the superstitions of mankind etc. With all this knowledge abroad, the Church knows it is fighting a losing battle, though it affects to proclaim to the world that it is very prosperous and important. The present pope is very assertive, as one can see from his frequent encyclicals, precisely because he feels that the world is abandoning his

Church. France, Portugal, Spain and Mexico, once the strongholds of the Church, have now ceased to be so. In these countries, the intelligentsia and even the moderately educated are supremely indifferent about the Catholic Religion. This religion is now played out. It can only interest the thoughtless, the imperfectly educated and such others who profess it without caring to determine whether it is true or not. So desperate has the position become, that we hear the present pope appealing to the other Churches to unite with him to fight the common enemy. Imagine then the condition of this proud Church which till recently scorned to have anything to do with heretical churches, but now appeals to these very groups for union for the purpose of self-protection ! A few years ago, who would have thought of the possibility of a Jesuit writing a book in collaboration with Protestant clergymen to demonstrate the truth of Christianity ! This has actually happened now and before long the Church of Rome may have to give up its medievalism to escape a rapid extinction. Its only hope is in keeping its adherents in ignorance as long as possible.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

A DYING GOD.

All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall ye pass and be past.

Ye are Gods, and behold, ye shall die, and the waves be upon you at last.

Swinburne. "Hymn to Proserpine."

In the early part of the year, when the Press and the Pulpit announced, with a fanfare of trumpets, the advent of Sir James Jeans' brand-new Mathematical God, and the absolutely final defeat—for the thousandth time—of Materialism as described by Sir Arthur Eddington, we remarked that the general public would be more likely to be staggered by the revelations, also made, as to the utter insignificance of mankind in the universe, than in the alleged existence of this transcendental Mathematician.

Sir James Jeans himself after describing our earth, in relation to the universe, as a "microscopic fragment of sand," observes:—

Our first impression is something akin to terror. We find the universe terrifying because of its vast meaningless distances, terrifying because of its inconceivably long vistas of time which dwarf human history to the twinkling of an eye, terrifying because of our extreme loneliness, and because of the material insignificance of our home in space—a millionth part of a grain of sand out of all the sea-sand in the world. But above all else, we find the universe terrifying because it appears to be indifferent to life like our own; emotion, ambition and achievement, art and religion all seem equally foreign to its plan. Perhaps indeed we ought to say it appears to be actively hostile to life like our own. (Sir J. Jeans: *The Mysterious Universe*. p. 3.)

Empty space is too cold to support life, and most of the matter in space is too hot for it to appear. And if this is the

impression a survey of the universe produces upon the mind of a scientist who is familiar with it, how much more it is likely to shock those to whom it comes with all the novelty of newness!

The clergy are now beginning to realize the truth of what we predicted at the time. The victorious trumpet peals die fitfully away and merge into a melancholy realization that the impression created by the new revelation is quite different from what was expected and required. In fact, quite the opposite to that desired.

The first-fruits of this chastened spirit, is the appearance of a symposium entitled *God and the Universe: the Christian Position*, edited, with an "Introduction," by Mr. J. Lewis May. It consists of three parts contributed by the following clergymen: The Rev. S. C. Carpenter, Chaplain to the King; Father M. C. D'Arcy, the Jesuit, M. A. of Oxford; and the Rev. Bertram Lee Woolf. Representing successively, the Church of England, the Church of Rome, and the Free, or Nonconformist Church. Mr. May, in his "Introduction," explaining the object of the book, observes, that lately, the scientists have brought home to us the immensity of the universe, with a wealth of illustration and exuberance, in marked contrast to the usual austere and arid style of scientific treatises. And further:—

In these more recent productions the cold and dispassionate figures of mathematics have been reinforced by luxuriant figures of speech, and embellished by a profusion of imagery, calculated not merely to impress, but to overwhelm, the imagination of the popular

audience to whom they are addressed. World upon world, system upon system, universe upon universe—the mind reels and loses itself in the endeavour to form even the most shadowy and tentative notion of the ineffable panorama thus presented to its contemplation. (*God and the Universe. p. 3*)

Fresh from their explorations, “and fired with a very proper enthusiasm for the marvels they have there beheld, they have come back, like the ghost at Elsinore, to tell us tales that shall harrow up our souls and freeze our very blood.” (p. 4.) Mr. May goes on to speak of the dizziness and inebriation which such a revelation may excite in unseasoned minds, and when the sensation of wonder has somewhat subsided, he may ask himself:—

“What becomes of religion; what becomes of Christianity, if these things be true?” Though no overt or formal attack be made on his beliefs, he may yet question, not without a sinking of the heart, how far the fact that this planet is but a grain of dust in the immeasurable universe, is compatible with a religion which would tell him that mankind is the noblest of created beings and the object of God’s special and merciful solicitude. If, as Science seems to allege, conscious life on this planet be but an accident, or at most a *parergon* (by product) in the general scheme of things, how shall such doctrines as those of the Atonement and the Redemption continue to claim allegiance from informed and thinking men? (p. 7.)

Aye, there’s the rub. Is it conceivable that God sent his only son down to this utterly insignificant planet, to suffer a hideous death as a sacrifice to placate his own father for the transgressions of mankind? It is not conceivable by any intelligent mind that has not been doped with religion. For the new Mathematical God, whose advent was received with

such enthusiasm, Mr. May has nothing but contempt; he observes: “Some of our Scientists, in an attempt to fill the void they deem themselves to have created, have endeavoured to set up a God of their own invention. But what manner of God is it for whom they would ask our allegiance? In their resolute attempt to avoid anything so primitive as anthropomorphism, they have imagined a deity even more nebulous than Matthew Arnold’s ‘Something not ourselves that makes for righteousness,’ and would feed the hungry soul with an abstraction, an idea, a mere formula.” (p. 11.)

When this new God was first announced, the general public, seeing the enthusiasm with which the religious world received him, never stopped to inquire as to how the new deity would fit into the framework of Christianity. He does not fit in at all. To do him justice Sir James Jeans, his inventor and High Priest, never claimed that he did; for he does not mention the Bible, Christianity, Jesus Christ, or even refer to a future life in the whole of his book, *The Mysterious Universe*, and the Rev. S. C. Carpenter, in the first essay in this symposium, treats Sir James, to use a legal phrase, as “a hostile witness,” and observes: “When Sir James Jeans says that the Great Architect of the universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician, he knows as well as anybody that no one can be a pure mathematician, and nothing else.” He couples it with “Professor Eddington’s defence of mystical religion,” and “calls attention to the fact that accomplished physicists have dissected the universe and have found a skeleton, or rather a diagram.” (pp. 39-40.)

Thus earthly glory passeth away. Considering the ovation with which the

new god of mathematics was received, he must have had the shortest reign on record. For the rest, and considering that the three writers of this symposium have been selected for their abilities, these essays are about the thinnest and most elementary defences of Christianity, it has ever been our misfortune to read. The Rev. S. C. Carpenter offers a defence

of the Trinity. Father D'Arcy directs us to "God's Word, which is unchanging and unchangeable." The Rev. B. L. Woolf completely ignores the subject. Mr. May engaged him to write about, and advises reliance on Jesus Christ.

W. MANN.
in "The Freethinker."

THE GODS ARE DEAD.

Apollo, that Splendid Youth,
is dead;
His Chariot of Fire, which dazzling rose from golden waves,
is vanished and gone;
Wotan and the great Valhalla gods of wrath and storm,
are dead;
Jehovah, the stern implacable,
is dead;
The god of our forefathers, hard and unforgiving,
he too is dead;
The god of creeds and ceremonies, of churches and of priests,
is dead;
The Galilean Demi-god, his gracious ways and lovely teaching
—all are dead.
Science and Reason have slain them all.

Whither shall we turn?
Can man nought but material know?
Is there not an "Unknown God"
Unimprisoned yet by form and rite?

Have we not seen
The "trail of glory" pass
The "burning bush"?
Have we not known
Th' eternity for ever lost
Encased in one short hour?
Have we not seen
Love, that can never die;
Beauty that hath but change, not death?

MARGARET POLE,
(The Literary Guide)

"STOP THAT DRIFTING."

Sir Herbert Austin's Appeal to Every Man and Woman
Who Wishes to Succeed in life.



Sir Herbert Austin, K. B. E.

"To command opportunity and compel success" he writes, "every man must have a full and sure conviction of his inherent right to a place in the sun, and must then train his mind to such vigour that it is capable of grappling with the problems of life as they arrive.

'Here it is that I am sure Pelmanism is proving of immense help to the people of to-day.

"Too many people are just drifting. Pelmanism can stop that drifting, and start the drifter on a useful journey." Make your mind Efficient.

A short course of Pelmanism banishes such weaknesses and defects as :

Depression	The Inferiority
Shyness & Timidity	Compelx "
Forgetfulness	Indecision
The Worry habit	Weakness of Will
Mind-wandering	Procrastination

which interfere with the effective workingpower of the mind, and develops strong, positive, vital qualities such as :

—Concentration	—Directive Ability
—Optimism	—Presence of mind
—Judgment	—Courage
—Initiative	—Self-Confidence
—Will Power	—Reliability
—Originality	—Driving Force
—Resourcefulness	—Salesmanship

and a Reliable Memory.

By developing these qualities you add to your Efficiency and consequently to your Earning Power.

The value of a Pelman Training is borne out by the letters received from those who have taken the Course, some extracts from which are given here :—

SIR HERBERT AUSTIN, Chairman of the world-famous Austin Motor Co., Ltd, and one of the most enterprising and successful industrial leaders, warmly recommends Pelmanism to those who wish to succeed in life.

An Agent writes: "I have more Self-Confidence and strong Will-Power." (C. 32,424.)

A Teacher writes: Your system has given me much power of Concentration and my memory has considerably improved." (B. 32,285)

An Apprentice writes: "In the 'Little Grey Books' I feel that I have a brain tonic that will last for ever." (K. 32,051.)

A Bank Clerk writes: "I feel sure I owe my new job to you, as I would not have tried for it if I had not that feeling of Confidence which your course gave me." (G. 32, 145)

A Secretary writes: "My Will-Power has certainly improved. I am less self-Conscious. I have developed greater determination—a will to succeed—and more tolerance towards others." (J. 32,148.)

A Typist writes: "There is a great improvement in my memory. I can recall things now without the great exertion which was required before I had the Course." (C. 32,509)

A Solicitor reports that he has increased in Self-confidence, alertness and Self control. He has also gained stronger powers of Perception and Concentration." (W. 32,651)

If, therefore, you wish to make the fullest use of the powers now lying latent or only Semi-developed in your mind, you should send to-day for a free copy of "The Efficient Mind" and for particulars enabling you 'to enrol' for a course of Pelmanism on specially convenient terms.

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The Secretary,

THE PELMAN INSTITUTE,

INDIAN HEADQUARTERS—DELHI, 52.

Please send me a Free Copy of "The Efficient Mind" and forms explaining convenient terms.

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Occupation

THANK GOD.

To a flashy Malabar Hill household came the news that Mahatma Gandhi had called off the Civil Disobedience Movement. "Thank God" exclaimed the Indian Christian Minister. "Thank God" said his meek wife. And "Thank God" piped in his devout Brahmin friend with equal fervor!

The universal relief was further aired by the Press, the Platform and the Pulpit, and, may be, budding divinities wrote articles entitled "Thank God, it's all over!"

That popular phrases must not be too literally interpreted, is more or less acknowledged, but to the Theist who argues with an Atheist, one of his knock-out arguments is "Why do you say, 'Thank God' or 'Oh God'? I maintain that there is a brazen insincerity about this particular form of thanks-giving which compels and provokes further contemplation. Now, is there any sense in thanking a being who, so far as one can see, has had nothing whatever to do with the matter? Should not thanks be given where thanks are due instead of thanking an unknown, unproven and an improbable being? Nor is one at all civilized to ignore the real benefactors and shout gratitude to someone else.

If you analyse your exclamatory thanks-giving to your pet Almighty, I do not think you will find thought playing any part in it at all.

While not condemning a spirit of thankfulness for favours past, present, and future, I do feel that it is just as well to see that it is properly directed.

To me two very obvious reflections are apparent. First, in such exclamatory

thanks-giving, I find it very improbable and irrational to believe that any extra-human agency could have suddenly popped in and suggested the calling off of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Second, if such an extra-human agency does exist, it is only reasonable to ask why it did not take charge from the beginning and not let the Civil Disobedience Movement be launched. One feels so and to an ordinary man this procedure would seem the wiser and simpler course.

By hypothesis, God could have used one of his "Omni" Powers and so influenced everybody that the trouble need never have arisen! Yet after millions of rupees have been lost in one form or another, and thousands of men and women have been in jail, or had their heads broken, the calling off of the Civil Disobedience Movement is supposed to have been the unintelligible and divine working of good God Almighty. As he is alleged to be all-powerful, and he had the power to stop it at the commencement, did he just watch the fun from above and have his sport?

The same considerations apply to the whole course of human life with its errors, its ghastly misunderstandings, its untold miseries, to say nothing of the suffering caused by natural causes—earthquakes, floods, cyclones etc.

It is the eternal difficulty of reconciling the genuine existence of evil with the theory of supreme goodness. You know, and I know that evil is a bitter reality, while this supreme goodness is just talk. Don't you see how little these two words "Thank God" mean to humanity at large?

I do not deny that the people are now seeing the absurdity of these quasi-pious ejaculations and realize that "Thank God" is a relic of a mode of thought that cannot be reconciled to present conditions of living and present scientific knowledge. If a great favour is granted, we thank the known donor, not some unknown being which may or may not have moved him to benevolence.

"Thank God" is of the same category as "Grace before meals," thanking not the cook, the butler, the meat-raiser, but an absolute outsider for the meat provided. Though I am not so sure that some people don't "Thank God" for every action of theirs. I can safely say, that most people do not do so when they buy a Motor Car or a bath tub or a tin of sausages. We pay for the stuff and we get it; if we once started a series of "Thank Gods" there would be no end to it, and we would be perpetually exuding gratitude and thoroughly bore everyone.

Looking at life as it is, and not as it is made out to be by priestly propaganda, one cannot help feeling that if an extra-human being regulates this world, he, she or it has got everything in a much worse muddle than the books of a bogus concern.

Can it really flatter an omnipotent and an omni-loving being to have its goodness—which is no effort for him—to be daily recognized? We often hear that only those people who pray can have an experience of such a being. All that this sort of arguments do, is to throw dust in the eyes of the easy and the uncritical majority, dishing up the same absurdities under a pseudo-scientific garb.

On intellectual grounds,—there are none others worth considering—it seems

impossible to prove the existence of a beneficent personal deity of the popular brand. Prayer to a hypothesis assumes that the hypothesis is a reality instead of a guess. Is it not on this that religion rests and utters its futile prayers and thanks-giving so wasteful in terms of money as well as energy?

Statistics are not available to show how many hundred million prayers per annum are uttered by uneasy supplicants in this city alone. Add to these the uneasy-ones of the rest of the world; it does make a tremendous total. One certainly has the "favours granted" advertisements in "The Times" to prove Divine intervention but I think that even the Editor of "The Times" would fight shy of such evidence as proof positive of the value of prayer!

The "proofs" frequently given, always ignoring the known factors and relying on the unknown, are entirely fallacious and unscientific. It is amusing that though often single prayers are considered not so effective, "United Prayers" have a charm and power on the Almighty, all their own. This admission of the dear padres rather shakes one's faith in an allwise Almighty rather than strengthen it. Do you know that when the Rector of Barnet was dying of cancer some years back, (July 1926 to be exact), the Bishop of St. Albans issued an appeal for United Prayers saying that his illness was a direct challenge to the Church! Anyhow the Rector died! We also had a few divine luminaries calling the country to united prayer to guide Lord Irwin and help him settle the Indian question and by the looks of it, either the prayers were evidently not united, or were entirely futile. Can't you see that if you admit the existence of an all wise, all

good, all powerful, and an all knowing Almighty, to offer prayers or advice to him to do so and so, is sheer high treason,—an impudent presumption on your part to know more than him, and a breach of faith in the all wise, all good and all etc. power of your Almighty?

We have all heard of the minister who prayed for a shower and got a deluge. "O Lord," he exclaimed, "this is really overdoing it;" and of the Bengalee whose turban was spoilt by a crow and he exclaimed "Thank God, cows don't fly."

A little knowledge of natural processes will alter the outlook greatly. I am not an optimist to believe that this article or the valiant efforts of "Reason" and other Rationalist literature will cure everybody overnight, because there are some who simply will not be cured, but I have great hopes of Time ridding the world of the old and replacing it with the New. The mental attitude of hugging the delusion of prayer for material benefits and of thanking for imaginary favours received, is on a par with the attitude of savages who prostrate themselves before the creatures of their own imagination without understanding the causes of such phenomena.

Unfortunately, man is too easy-going a fellow and an idolator at heart. Much of the religion of the 20th century is sheer superstition and its vitality may be realized by the outpourings and doings of the "religio-addicts" of the world, especially in Roman Catholic Italy, crazy America, ignorant India and old-fashioned England. The orgies of hysterical religiosity which are supposed by many to be manifestations of divine influence are nauseating to every normal rational human being but "sacred" to them.

If only our political leaders cut out the nonsense about God, prayers, fasting, days of silence, caste marks, carrying of Ganges water to Europe etc., etc., one might feel a little bit hopeful for the future of India. Fortunately for her, not only the Youth of India is awakening, but the Women are coming out and the future of India is in their hands, whether she is to be the same old ignorant, downtrodden, priest-ridden, superstitious religion-sodden India, or a self-respecting, self-governing, educated, prosperous, rational, broadminded, progressive India which will then be a world power.

D. R. D. WADIA.

WILL RELIGION DIE ?

The older school of Rationalists, when replying to demands for a more militant and popular form of propaganda, frequently quote with approval the words of Charles Bradlaugh: "No one ever saw a religion die." I wish in this article to inquire whether the statement is true. In the literal sense it is obviously not true. Many religions have in fact died; and since they died somebody must have seen them die. There must have been a moment when the last worshipper of Isis or Serapis crouched by the Nile in despair, murmuring the Egyptian equivalent of *Vicisti, Galilæe*. There must have been a time when the last pagan Greek or Roman, beholding the cult of the Olympians finally stamped underfoot, in effect said:—

I have lived long enough, having seen one thing, that love hath an end ;

Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and befriend.

I know the accepted answer to this. I shall be told that Paganism did not die, but survived under a thin disguise in Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. Or else I shall be reminded that the old religion, ousted from its temples and driven underground, persisted right through the Middle Ages under the illicit form of witchcraft. In either case the objection is not to the point. The rites and forms of a religion may persist, either openly or secretly, for an indefinite time; but if there is no consciousness of continuity it is not the same religion. It is Conceivable that Catholic ritual may survive a thousand years hence only under Communist auspices; if so, Catholicism will in fact be dead. The Madonna and Child

of the Middle Ages bore a certain external resemblance to Isis and Horus, and the one representation doubtless influenced the other; but if you had told a Catholic congregation that Mary was Isis you would have been burnt alive. As for the witches, so far as can be judged the poor things sincerely believed themselves to be worshipping the devil, and there is no evidence that they had ever heard of Dionysus or Pan, even if one of those genial deities could be proved to be historically the prototype of Lucifer.

Paganism, then, died in the only sense in which the death of a religion can be said to have a meaning—that is, its priest-hoods became extinct, its temples were disendowed and disused, and its tradition was repudiated. This, however melancholy a thought, is reassuring, since history sometimes repeats itself, and if Paganism died, so too may Christianity. Otherwise the Rationalist Movement might as well shut up shop; for no sane man, surely, would set himself the task, Sisyphus-like, of rolling the stone of reason uphill only to see it rebound eternally into the gulf of superstition.

On the other hand, it may plausibly be urged, the defeat of Paganism by Christianity is no guarantee that the latter will in turn be defeated by Rationalism, but rather the contrary. Ancient Rationalism proved in the end powerless against the established religions of its day. Both Epicureanism and Stoicism were stone-dead long before the pagan temples were deserted. Their academic successor, Neo-Platonism, so far from attacking the official cults, effected an accommodation with them, as Modernism does to-day, by

the allegorical interpretation or judicious jettisoning of offensive myths. When Paganism died it was under the assaults not of reason, but of a rival superstition. Similarly, it may be suggested, Christianity is more likely to go down before some new form of supernaturalism, such as Spiritualism or Theosophy, than before any naturalistic view of the universe. In other words, Christianity may die, but will religion die?

Upholders of the negative sometimes argue as follows. Man is not and can never be a wholly rational animal; reason is only one faculty among many. Rationalism, therefore, can never satisfy the human mind. Man requires food for his emotions and his imagination no less, indeed more, than for his reason; religion affords this food; and therefore religion will never die. The fallacy here is to assume that the emotions and the imagination can be fed only by religion. Granted that man instinctively demands satisfactions which reason alone cannot supply, it by no means follows that he instinctively requires to believe in the supernatural. The contrary is the case. Belief in the supernatural arises not to satisfy our instincts, but in a crude attempt to satisfy our reason. Anyone who has ever held such beliefs knows this. We want to know how we began and how the world began, and are offered God as an explanation. When we are able to reason better we discover that the explanation does not explain. If supernatural belief were instinctive the Churches would not attach the vital importance which they do to the religious education of children.

It is not true, therefore, that man is by nature a supernaturalist. It is true, I

think, that he is by nature mythopœic—that is, he has an irresistible impulse to believe things of which he has no positive proof. This has advantages as well as dangers. If we never believed anything except on the evidence of our senses or of mathematical reasoning we should not survive long to tell the tale. If science had confined itself to the simple enumeration of phenomena and had never framed a hypothesis it would never have made any advance. The difference between the scientific and unscientific mind is not that the scientist never indulges in hypotheses, but that he chooses hypotheses which can be checked by calculation, observation, or experiment, and drops them when they conflict with these. In other words, scientific beliefs, if they are myths—as in part they may be—are *serviceable* myths, while superstitious beliefs are *unserviceable* myths.

Serviceable for what? Clearly for promoting the common ends of life. And this brings me to the real reason why I think religion will die. Man is essentially a bundle of desires demanding satisfaction—the desire for food and drink, the desire for cover and shelter, the desire for society, the desire for beauty, the desire for knowledge, and so on. I have placed the more primitive and urgent desires first only because they are normally felt first. The satisfaction of these desires, as we know, requires a considerable amount of contrivance, individual or social; most people find it a difficult enough business. Religion, faced with these demands, endeavours to meet them by cheques drawn on another world—witness the parable of Dives and Lazarus. This in fact is the only social function of religion in a civilized community. At the time when Christianity

originated, and until quite recently, the mass of mankind were ready to take this form of payment in default of a better. To-day, owing to scientific and industrial developments on which it is unnecessary to dilate, people are increasingly of opinion that by suitable contrivance their demands can be met in *this* world. That belief may, of course, be only another menace of man's mythopœic tendency; but the hypothesis is there, and will not be dropped until it has been thoroughly tested by experiment.

Religion, faced with this development, nevertheless goes on issuing cheques drawn on the other world. It cannot help itself; that is what it is for. In the long run these two currencies cannot coexist: one must drive out the other. Finesse on both sides may postpone the clash for a little, but it must come. If the hypothesis, that human demands can by proper

planning be satisfied in this world, should finally break down, religion will be saved. Rationalists may argue till all is blue, but no amount of argument will prevent supernaturalism in some form or other ruling the roost in a society where the masses are bereft of secular hope. If, on the other hand, it proves possible by systematic contrivance to satisfy the general desire for a decent mundane existence, religion will die; for a race which has succeeded in paying itself in true coin will not tolerate false.

For my part I think the second alternative the more likely.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON
(" Robert Arch ").
in " The Literary Guide."

Catholics and Socialism

Socialism has two sins which renders it unacceptable to Catholics: its principle of social war and irreligion.

Socialism is founded on rationalistic principles and in consequence has no use for religion. To be a socialist a man has to throw overboard all Christian beliefs, and doctrines. The starting point of the socialistic theory, as it is propounded by Marx, Bebel and other leaders of Socialism, is the denial of a spiritual world; of a future life, of revelation.

"The Messenger of the Sacred Heart"

—January, 1932.

Bishop and Population.

Nothing has pleased me more during the past year, than the increased interest that is being taken in population questions. When I used to speak on such matters a few years ago, I expected abusive letters or postcards as the inevitable result. Now all is changed. It is generally agreed that children ought not to be born unless they can be properly cared for. It is also agreed among normal people that marriage without children is either a calamity or a crime. Some religious bodies and individuals manifest a blind opposition to the new population ideals. Regard for these ideals is, nevertheless, spreading, and I commend them as definitely and emphatically Christian. To improve the quality of the population seemed, when I was a boy, a far-off dream. Even now we can do but little. Yet the advances made by biology in the last thirty years are so rapid and significant that one can be almost infinitely hopeful as to the future.

Bishop of Birmingham in a
broadcast address.

Anti-God Movement In Germany.

Germany has become the centre of the Anti-God Movement. It cannot be denied that the agents are successful particularly among the poor. In the year 1929 not less than 42,855 persons have left the Catholic Church in Germany. Out of these 38,009 have declared that they wish to belong to no religion. Slack business and unemployment will naturally not create a religious enthusiasm, especially when free thinkers and unbelievers are active in their campaign against reform. Berlin is the centre of the movement, selected as such by the International Congress of Freethinkers held on 18th March, 1931. Berlin is in close touch with Moscow. A flood of pamphlets and books covers the country. One such leaflet says, "For 25 years we have been working. 600,000 members are on the rolls; two million Christians have left the churches. This encourages us in our work." Between October 1930 and March 1931, the membership of the Union of the Godless rose from 88,200 to 119,400 due to a vigorous campaign in the Berlin area. The paper of the Union has an edition of 1,265,000. Besides these papers, speeches, gramophone records, radios, concerts, songs etc. are effective means of propaganda. Groups of singers serenade in the slums, and when the crowd has gathered they put up a table and lists of people who wish to leave the church are soon filled. What will be the end?

(Messenger of the Sacred Heart.)

Social Reform in India.

Mr. Shanmukham Chetty has tabled in the Assembly a Bill to remove the disabilities of the untouchables. He has also a bill to prevent the dedication of women to service in the Hindu temples.

Attack on Sarda Act.

Bills to repeal the Child Marriage Restraint Act as well as to amend the same Act and a bill to repeal the Special Marriage Amendment Act of 1923 stand in the names of Haji Wajiuddin, Raja Bahadur Krishnamachariar, and Pandit Satyendranath Sen respectively.

The Divorce Act.

Sir Hari Singh Gour's attempts to effect reforms in the Hindu marriage laws has met with failure. Because of the apathy shown by the members of the Assembly, the bill could not be discussed for want of a quorum.

Sarda Act in force.

An old man of fifty who wanted to marry a girl of six has been prevented from doing so.

A case under sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Child Marriage Restraint Act against five persons including the bridegroom and the bride's parents has been filed in the court of the Additional District Magistrate. The complainant who is one of the relatives of the girl, alleges that the bride is eleven years of age and the bridegroom 23, that on January 30 last, the bridegroom deliberately, in violation of the provisions of the aforesaid act, married the girl and that the parents of the girl abetted the commission of the offence in bringing about the marriage.

The other accused have also taken part in and have further helped the commission of the offence.

Birth Control is a Social Necessity

I desire, also to see the practice of birth control—perhaps the greatest discovery since the invention of fire—made freely available to all social classes. It is the main avenue to the emancipation of women. It is the best safeguard for a proper relationship between parents and children. It is the surest way of making effective comradeship possible between men and women. I know few things so intolerable as the fact that divine revelation should be claimed for the obsolete habits of an Eastern nomadic tribe and their consequent imposition upon a society which might otherwise open a high road to freedom. Birth control alone makes possible the conquest by society of hereditary degeneracy. If Roman Catholics and others find its methods offensive, no one asks that they should practice them. But they ought not to make their private view of moral truth the measure of permissible social practice.

If I could, I should like to suffuse all our educational system with an insistence upon the two essential virtues of scepticism and experiment. Until we are prepared to admit that most of what we announce as necessary truth or vital institutions are in large part, merely the truth or institutions to which we have grown accustomed, we shall ourselves place the main barriers in the way of social advance. Scepticism is essential that we may not stay unduly the prisoners of our past; experiment that we may not be paralyzed by the unwillingness to be dogmatic about matters of social constitution. Both promote the habit of tolerance; and tolerance has ever been the parent of discovery.

HAROLD J. LASKI
IN "THE NATION."

Obscenity and the Law.

Mr. R. D. Karve M. A., a member of our Association and a staunch social reformer is being prosecuted for publishing obscene literature. The case is still sub-judice. Mr. Karve has published books dealing with birth control in Marathi, and is conducting a magazine in Marathi which advocates radical reforms in society. In view of the case, the following report of a case in the United States and published by the Journal of the American Medical Association in their issue of April 4, 1931, may be interesting to our readers.

Sex Hygiene Pamphlet Not Obscene Literature

*(United States v. Dennett (C. C. A.)
39 Fed. (2d) 564)*

The defendant published and deposited in the mails a pamphlet purporting to give accurate sex hygiene information. She was convicted, after trial by jury, of mailing obscene matter in contravention of section 211, United States Criminal Code (18 USCA Sec. 334), which provides that every obscene, lewd, or lascivious pamphlet is nonmailable matter. She appealed to the Circuit Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, where the judgement of the trial court was reversed.

The important consideration in this case, said the appellate court, is the meaning and scope of the words of the statute which prohibit the mailing of an "obscene lewd, or lascivious pamphlet." It was for the trial court to determine whether the pamphlet could reasonably be thought to be of such a character before submitting to the jury any questions concerning the violation of the statute. The test most frequently laid

down seems to have been whether it would tend to deprave the morals of those into whose hands the publication might fall. It may be assumed that any article dealing with the sex side of life and explaining the functions of the sex organs is capable in some circumstances of arousing lust. The sex impulses are present in every one and without doubt cause much of the weal and woe of human kind. It can hardly be said, however that because of the risk of arousing sex impulses there should be no instruction of the young in sex matters, and that the risk of imparting instructions out-weighs the disadvantages of leaving youth to grope about in mystery and morbid curiosity, to secure such information as they may be able to obtain, from ill-informed and often foul-minded companions rather than from intelligent and high-minded sources. It may be argued that suggestion plays a large part in such matters and that on the whole the less sex questions are dwelt on the better. But it by no means follows that such a desideratum is attained by leaving adolescents in a state of inevitable curiosity, satisfied only by the casual gossip of ignorant playmates.

The old theory that information about sex matters should be left to chance has greatly changed. While there is still a difference of opinion as to just the kind of instruction which ought to be given, it is commonly thought in these days that much was lacking in the old mystery and reticence. The statute we have to construe, said the court, was never thought to bar from the mails everything which might stimulate sex impulses. If so, much chaste poetry and fiction, as well as many useful medical works, would be under the ban. The law must be construed reasonably, with a view to the

general objects aimed at. It must not be assumed to have been designed to interfere with serious instruction regarding sex matters unless the terms in which the information is conveyed are clearly indecent. No decision was brought to the attention of the court in which a truthful exposition of the sex side of life, evidently calculated for instruction and for the explanation of relevant facts, had been held to be obscene.

The defendant's discussion of the phenomena of sex, said the court, is written with sincerity of feeling and with an idealization of the marriage relation and sex emotions. We think it tends to rationalize and dignify such emotions rather than to arouse lust. While it may be thought by some that portions of the tract go into unnecessary details that would better have been omitted, it may be fairly answered that the curiosity of many adolescents would not be satisfied without full explanation, and that no

more than that is really given. It also may reasonably be thought that accurate information, rather than mystery and curiosity, is better in the long run and is less likely to occasion lascivious thoughts than ignorance and anxiety. Perhaps instruction other than that which the defendant suggests would be better. That is a matter as to which there is bound to be a wide difference of opinion, but, irrespective of this, an accurate exposition of the relevant facts of the sex side of life in decent language and in manifestly serious and disinterested spirit cannot ordinarily be regarded as obscene. Any incidental tendency to arouse sex impulses which such a pamphlet may perhaps have is apart from and subordinate to its main effect. The tendency can exist only so far as it is inherent in any sex instruction and it would seem to be outweighed by the elimination of ignorance, curiosity and morbid fear. The direct aim and the net result is to promote understanding and self-control.

AT THE SECRETARIES' TABLE.

• Prize-Essay.

We offer our congratulations to Mr. R. D. Karve, M.A. whose essay on "Sadhus and Fakirs" has been awarded the Fifty Rupees Prize offered by the Association. Mr. Karve is doing yeoman service in the cause of social reform in this presidency and has suffered many a setback in life for holding steadfastly to his mental convictions. We therefore feel very happy that the prize should have gone to him. His essay appears on another page of this issue. The Editor will also publish some of the other essays that were submitted, but which failed to get the prize.

Renewal of subscriptions.

We are happy to note that inspite of the bad times there has been a fair response to the renewal of subscriptions. We hope that such as have not yet send

them in will do so as soon as they receive this issue of "Reason." For others who find it inconvenient or are liable to forget, may we send the next copy per V. P. P. for the annual subscription? A post card to us will be greatly appreciated.

New Books for the Library.

Mr. Vivian Phelps has sent us a copy of his book "The Churches and Modern Thought", and V. K. D. Ayyangar "Long Missing Links" We are very grateful to these gentlemen for their gifts.

New members.

The following are our new members:—
Dr. M. C. Kothary, Mrs. V. K. Mann, Dr. Nazir Ahmed, Ph. D., Major S. Sokhey, M. D., I. M. S., Mrs. A. J. Wadia, Mr. Venkata Krishnayya, Mr. Ramdas Khimji, Mr. Venkatlal Pittie, and Lt. S. D. Varma.

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RELIGION AND CONDUCT.

Witchcraft in Midlands.

Though witches are no longer burned at the stake in England, it is apparent from a police-court case at Wolverhampton recently that there are still left people who stand in fear of them and of the consequences of incurring their displeasure.

Happenings in remote country districts of the Midlands and allegations which are made in police courts from time to time reveal the existence of a surprising belief in witch-craft and superstitions.

The case was one in which a wife summoned her husband for persistent cruelty, alleging he struck her with a poker. The husband was asked if he had any witnesses, and a man came forward who said he saw what happened, but dare not speak of what he saw because, he alleged, the woman was a "witch" and would put a spell on him.

The woman, he declared, boiled violets in water and then cast her spells.

The statement was greeted with some laughter, in which the woman joined, but the man would not give evidence.

His attitude confirms the view that in a locality which has been so industrialised as South Staffordshire, the old beliefs linger.

In another police court at Tipton, in the same area, similar allegations of casting spells have been made in recent years.

The casting of spells is only one of many superstitions which survive in the Black Country. There is the belief: That bread baked on Good Friday will never go mouldy.

That rain caught on the same day is a cure for affections of the eye, and

That hot-cross buns preserved from one year to another render the house immune from fire.

Many are the beliefs regarding supposed cures for illness. Amulets are still

worn, raw potatoes are held to be good for rheumatism, and a certain bone from a sheep's head soothes neuralgia.

A superstition which has been revealed at local coroner's inquests, though less frequent since the war, is that a loaf of bread containing a quantity of quick-silver, if placed in the water, will float exactly over the spot where the body lies.

Death tokens are numerous—as entering a house with a broom over the shoulder, supposed noises in a table drawer, the chirping of a cricket, the "winding sheet" in a candle, and the howling of a dog near to a house where a person lies ill.

Fear of Black Magic.

Believing that his neighbour, Khurangthong, a Naga, had already killed four men by practising black magic on them and had threatened to kill others likewise, Zamthuilang, another Naga, hit the former over the head with an axe, killing him instantaneously.

Charged with murder, Zamthuilang confessed to his having murdered Khurangthong, adding at the same time that he thought his own brother had been on the dead man's black-magic waiting list. He supported his contention by stating that after a quarrel with the man his brother had fallen seriously ill. Further more, he asserted, that four of his friends had suddenly died under the influence of Khurangthong's black art. He, therefore, decided that it was his duty to save the village from what he thought was a real menace.

The accused, however, was sentenced to death by Mr. G. D. Walker, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, with a recommendation to the Governor-in-Council to commute the sentence to one of transportation for life.

BRAHMANISM.

The King and the Brahmin.

Though Manu ostensibly flatters the king by calling him a "divine being in human shape," yet he commands him to respect and revere the Brahmin.

"Even though the king be a hundred years old, and even though a Brahmin be only ten years old, they are like son and father respectively; a Brahmin boy is ever the father of the aged king." (II-135.)

"A king should worship Brahmin Graduates who have recently passed their examination, for they are the inexhaustible Brahma treasure of the kings." (VII. 82)

"When two Brahmins are quarrelling among themselves the king should worship them before passing any judgment on them."

Manu further sees that the Brahmin is not badly off so far as free service and donations are concerned. For, he says:—

"To serve and comfort a Brahmin is one of the beneficial duties of a king." (VII. 88).

"When a Brahmin, protected by a king performs his religious duties, then the life, wealth and the territory of that king is sure to be increased." (VII. 136).

"A kingdom, in which a Brahmin learned in the Vedas pines away with hunger, is sure to be destroyed with starvation." (VII. 134).

"A king ought to protect as well as maintain the Brahmin as if they were his step-sons." (VII. 135).

The Brahmin takes the most advantageous position always—of the father, irrespective of his age, when it is a matter of respect and reverence, and of a step-brother, when it is a matter of material support and comfort.

In the administration of the kingdom, Manu is of opinion that the high administrative posts like those of the prime-minister and the Chief Justice should

also go to the Brahmins who are learned in the Vedas.

"When a Brahmin, learned in the Vedas is nominated by the king as his representative in the Court of Justice, then that Court is to be looked upon as the Court of the god, Brahma, the Creator" (VIII. 11).

"A king should entrust all his political work to his Brahmin prime-minister in full confidence and act upon his advice." (VII. 59).

"A king should appoint as a judge only a Brahmin, whether learned in the Vedas or not, or even anybody who calls himself a Brahmin, but never a Shudra." (VIII. 20). If however a Shudra be appointed as a judge, then that kingdom is sure to be destroyed.

The Brahmin's sources of revenue are many. For —

"If wealth deposited under the earth is discovered, the king should give half the share to the Brahmins, and put the remaining half into his treasury." (VIII. 8).

"A king should never keep with him, the money obtained as a penalty from those accused of sin.... The king should dedicate it to the god Varuna by casting it into the water or donate it to the Brahmins, learned in the Vedas and of good conduct."

"A king should perform many a sacrifice when he should make liberal donations; he should offer to the Brahmins money and luxurious gifts very freely." (VII. 79).

In spite of all these sources of income the Brahmin is to be immune from all taxation.

"A king should never exact any tax from a Brahmin, even in times of financial distress." (VII. 133).

The Shraddha Ceremonies.

These are splendid occasions for the Brahmin to gratify his appetite. Though according to the Hindu religion every one of us has to suffer in the next according to the nature of life we lead while here, and nothing can alter this after death, yet the Brahmins instituted this ceremony of propitiation. It is taught that the souls of the departed—the Pitris, suffer in a place called Put and that the intensity of their suffering is minimised by feeding the Brahmins and making other sacrifices.

“During a Shraddha ceremony, the Pitris hover unseen round about the Brahmins. They walk imperceptibly like wind when the Brahmins walk, and sit near them when they sit.” (III. 132).

The beneficial effects of the Shraddha ceremony are great.

“A man, even though living is as good as dead if he does not nourish the Pitris.

“One who does Pitri worship daily (along with a dinner to the Brahmins) obtains sons, grandsons, wealth etc.” (III. 127).

The amelioration of the condition of the Pitris depends upon the quality of food offered to the Brahmins.

“The Pitris remain satisfied for two months if fish is offered to the Brahmins; for three months, if the flesh of a deer; for four months, if the flesh of a lamb; for five months, if that of eatable birds; for six months if of a goat; for seven months if of a Chitra-deer; eight months, if of an Ena Deer. (III 268-272).

It is interesting to note that the Brahmins of those days had no scruples against meat-eating. But today are they not all essentially vegetarians?

During this ceremony, there should be no stinting so far as food is concerned.

“The Brahmins are to be served, without being jealous, with such articles of food as they relish most” (III. 232).

They should be permitted to dine slowly and be constantly egged on to eat more and after the “dinner is over, the host should ask the Brahmin if he is satisfied”.

The efficacy of feeding the Brahmin can be best laid out in the words of Manu, for he says :—

“A dinner, offered into the mouth of a Brahmin, which is as holy as the sacrificial fire, liberates the feeder from great sins, as well as from miseries.” (III 96).

“What is meant to be offered into a sacrificial fire is sometimes wasted, is sometimes dried up and sometimes disappears; but what is offered into the mouth of a Brahmin is never destroyed; therefore the mouth of a Brahmin is superior to the Fire” (VII. 84).

After reading these instructions laid down by the great law-giver, it is refreshing to turn to Charvaka. He writes :—

If offerings of food can satisfy
Hungry departed spirits, why supply
The man who goes a journey with
provisions?

His friends at home can feed him
with oblations.

If those living in celestial spheres,
Are filled by food presented upon earth
Why should not those who live on
upper stories

Be nourished by a meal spread out
below?

Charvaka exhorts every man to enjoy himself while living :—

“While life endures, let life be spent in ease and merriment.

(To be continued)

HINDU.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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[Monthly ;

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. Articles are accepted for publication only on condition that they are not sent to any other journal. For further information write to the Hon'y Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

"Happy days are here again" This is what one feels like singing when one reads that the Nizam has encouraged the discarding of the Purdah and that Pundit Madan Malaviya has distributed Mantra

Diksha to 150 Untouchables on the banks of the holy Ganges. Religious customs need the support of men of power and position and it is not so much the moral as the monetary force that keeps religion going. When reformers point their finger at any silly custom, the orthodox refer them to

some rich or eminent man who observes that custom and is still "big." Hence the utterance of the Nizam who is looked up to by all orthodox Muslims, is certainly welcome. We hope that what he has encouraged in Lucknow, he will actively work for in his own state where his powers are nearly unlimited. He could make a start with his own harem and the presence of the reformed Turkish princesses will make the reformation easier. Perhaps at his next visit to Bombay, the ladies of his harem may drive to his Bombay palace in open cars. The Nawabs of Hyderabad whose loyalty is proverbial will not lose time to emulate His Exalted Highness and then the rank and file will follow, though unfortunately Hyderabad is by population a Hindu State. The Ruler of Bhopal who is so advanced should then have no hesitation to institute the same reform in his territory. That religion cannot be endangered by such a move is amply proved by the experience of Turkey which, in spite of many radical reforms, is still Mahomedan. The purdah is an outcome of the male's distrust of another male and the fear that the primitive sexual urge may snap all conventions accepted by society for the mutual good of its members. In uncivilised societies there may have been need for such a restriction. In the greater part of the world and for a greater part of their existence, human society has lived without the purdah and on the whole has been happy. There have been lapses but they are certainly not enough to warrant the perpetuation of such cruelty. It is only ignorance and the irrational conservatism that is in the way. Even if complete abolition is not possible at once, a modified purdah could be introduced as some of my friends have done. Their wives

go out with them without purdah to social functions or cinemas or drives. They can see and be seen; only no men friends are introduced to them. Though the men friends have a grouse against the way they are treated, yet one feels happy that these Muslim youths have gone so far. Should this be practised more widely, the physical well-being and mental emancipation of so many Indian ladies will be assured.

Though I congratulate the orthodox Pundit for introducing reform in the very heart of Hinduism, yet I feel he has not gone far enough. The complaint often heard is that these converted Untouchables still remain as such for they form a class by themselves. It is the repetition of the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act. Though there are no legal objections to their marrying, yet hardly any widows marry because the Hindu society is still against it. There are a fair number of Untouchables in Bombay who are educated; but they feel that they are not wanted anywhere. Pundit's efforts will only swell this number. Could not the Pundit try something else? Why not he have his food in any restaurant or with a family which is not of his caste, so long as the food prepared is clean and whole-some? If he is prepared to eat the same food as these Untouchables do and follow it up by eating food cooked by non-Brahmins whenever he is away from home; if he should try and get some members of his family married to a suitable person from amongst these converts, then I would consider it a definite step forward. Sacred threads and Mantra Dikshas cannot dredge the muck out of the holy Ganges. The abolition of sectional kitchens, and frequent inter-marriages are more useful. When he was arrested in Bombay during the last

movement his son had to bring food for him. If Punditji finds himself behind prison bars again, will he partake of food cooked at the common kitchen?

* * *

A. Briand was greatly responsible for the separation of the Church from the State in France. At that

The end of time he was entrusted **Rationalists.** with the task of preparing a report on their relations. In the Chambre he was one of the most powerful and eloquent opponents of the clericals. He was punished with an excommunication by the church. But on the day of his public funeral the Arch-Bishop of Paris pronounced a Catholic Blessing on his remains! This butting in on the part of religious bodies is still unfortunately common. When a prince or a prominent man dies, the Churches are anxious to claim him as their own. Some of you may remember the story of King Edward dying a Catholic, because some one found a scapular on his person. One does not wish to deny that there are bedside conversions, but the accounts of most of them are very much exaggerated. Since rationalism is not widespread, it is quite common to meet solitary rationalists in many families. However stout a fighter this lonely knight may have been, death ends the scene, and his relatives have the right to dispose of his body in the best way they like. So, even though they could not take him to a mosque during his life, after death the corpse is submitted to the full fire of religious frenzy. The relatives respect the wishes of the dead so far as his clothes, his grave and other personal requests are concerned, but they hesitate to bury him without religious rites. This has been observed time and over again in England and there an attempt is made to substitute

a religious by a more rational ceremony. Though it really does not matter, it would certainly be more befitting if the religious part was omitted from the funerals of Rationalists. It would be atleast burying them as they lived.

* * *

"Many thousands of Catholics made a pilgrimage to the ancient chapel on the outskirts of the City

**Forcing
God's
Hands.**

yesterday at midnight and knelt for three hours in the bitter cold praying for the success of Von Hindenberg." So runs a special cable from London. With the advance of civilisation, human needs and activities have multiplied a thousand fold. The result is that there is a rush on the time of God. To believe that we owe everything to God and that we cannot do anything without him is considered highly meritorious because it is a sign of humility and God loves humility from his creature-worms, the more so if it is of the prostrating type. The result of such a belief is that it is far more advisable to consult God and ask him for his aid before commencing any operation. This aid may be an active co-operation or a passive blessing in the form of good wishes. He is asked to bless a dinner, a battle-ship or a nation's flag. He is asked to bring victory and vanquish the enemy, to send rain, to cure illness, to fertilise seeds, to destroy vermin; all that the active minds and hearts of millions of men and women can desire. Still with all that, matters are in no way better. He is still naughty and forgetful at times. He likes to arrange a war, or send a pestilence or kill the only support of the family. And then there is prayer, heart-rending prayer. Yet he watches the

game and does nothing. One should not expect much either, considering that his hands are so full.

Realising that individual prayers are not successful, a novel method of attacking the deity on all fronts is being resorted to. A cable from London says that a group of sympathisers of India's aspirations having felt the potency of prayer are arranging to pray at a particular time and would like that similar congregations should do likewise elsewhere at the same time. Instead of having Congress Flag Salutations with arrests and mild lathi charges, we may have Congress Prayer Meetings and the police, may out of respect for the Lord of Lords, wait till the function is over to commence their job! Such mass prayers were offered during the last war by various nations to the same just God. We all now know His decision, and knowing it feel happy that we were so young and so ought to be

excused for our silliness. In spite of that line from Tennyson, I feel that prayer has done nothing in this world. By this I mean, there never has been an active interference by that "Supreme Being" in the interests of anybody. What success has been ascribed to it has been entirely due to the spurred efforts of the individual or to mere coincidence. It is said that the best form of Prayer is "Thy will be done." Verily so, for then you can never doubt the efficacy of prayer as one gratefully accepts whatever happens as the Holy Will. Here, at least, there is not that distrust in the omniscience and love of God, as there is in other petitional prayer where you tell Him what His business ought to be, however mildly you may put it. And the new method of mass prayer all over the world does certainly seem like an attempt to force His Holy Hands.

ALI AKBAR.

ASCETICISM.

One of the most curious aberrations to which the human mind is liable is the idea of Asceticism, which is based on a belief that privations and mortifications are very pleasing to God. Though this idea may seem strange to a normal mind, yet it appears perfectly logical to a mystic. Living as he does in a supernatural world of his own creation, he imagines that his eccentricities are perfectly rational since he believes that God is very capricious and contradictory and takes great interest and pleasure in the doings of these creatures.

Asceticism has been practised in the East from time immemorial, and according to Porphyry, the practice was also popular amongst the Egyptians and Phoenicians. The Greeks practised it largely. It does not appear to have been very popular with the materialistic minded Romans.

Since Ascetics think that God is pleased at their self-imposed privation and suffering, the practice takes many forms ranging from self-denial to self-torture. In our country, its adepts imposed upon themselves self-torture that is simply amazing and resorted to practices that are often disgusting and revolting. They expose themselves naked to the violence of the weather, cut themselves with knives, eat offal, smear their bodies with filth and live in jungles and caves. Some of them have been known to commit suicide by strange means, such as decapitation by means of cutting contrivances manipulated by themselves. Suicides have been known to take place during festivals of great solemnity as at the Jaggernat Temple at Puri and elsewhere. At Puri, it is re-

ported, many of these sadhus throw themselves before the big car and are crushed to death. It is a common sight in India to see a Sadhu lying on a bed of thorns and pikes, or keeping his arm in such a position that the circulation is very much impaired. Muslim Fakirs drag heavy chains or cannon balls, lie on iron spikes, perforate their tongues and mutilate their bodies under the belief that Allah is greatly pleased at these stunts of theirs. Flagellation is a popular practice among these. It is stated that the adherents of Zoroastrianism, like the ancient Egyptians, modern Jews and Christians, have submitted to flagellation. Fasting is another exercise of the Ascetics. It is believed that fasting reduces the proneness to sin and renders communion with God easier. In view of the physiological finding that severe fasting renders one liable to hallucinations of vision, hearing and feeling, it is certainly interesting to note that most visionaries were those ascetics who had submitted themselves to severe fasting.

Christians have in all ages suffered pains in order to atone for their sins, a belief shared by Hindus, Muslims, Jews Zoroastrians and others. Among the Buddhists, asceticism is practised not to please any deity, but because privation and suffering is believed to lead to perfection and to lessen the number of existences before obtaining Nirvana. The Brahmins practise it not only for the sake of Nirvana, but also to develop supernatural powers.

One would think that with enlightenment this practice would die out. It is true that now-a-days one seldom hears of the silly antics performed by some of

the saints, but in a lesser form it is still widely practised amongst Christians, both Catholics and Protestants. Most of the monastic orders have strict rules on the subject. Wearing coarse clothing next to the skin, or collars and vests studded with spikes, isolation, mutism, fasting, begging for food, flagellation and other forms of chastisement are to be found amongst the spiritual exercises of these orders. There is an order called Flagellants, the members of which must scourge themselves publicly till blood runs out of their body. Some impose certain penances upon themselves which are extremely revolting and disgusting, such as wearing chamber utensils on their heads, drinking their urine and even eating their own excrement. Father John of the Sacred Heart thought this was the most pleasing penance in the eyes of God, probably emulating the example of St. Benedict Labrus who also believed that living in extreme filth was the best preparation to get into heaven. I do not suppose that many of the modern priests and nuns would do any of the revolting acts

described above as efficacious religious exercises and meritorious mortification. Yet a Catholic author, the Viscount Maxime de Montmorand writes in his book "*Psychologie des Mystiques Catholiques*" page 77, that most Christian ascetics are scatophagians! If the antics, as described above, were not an evidence of mental infirmity, one would laugh heartily at these lunatics; being an infirmity one feels pity for them, but we cannot pray for them.

A study of Asceticism throws much light on the mentality of mystics. Besides the egotism that makes them believe that their god or gods is constantly watching their actions, it reveals the poor idea they have of the deity. Their god must be a fiend, cruel and capricious, malicious and malignant, who rejoices when his creatures are suffering, who frowns when they are happy and is most difficult to please. In other words a perfect tyrant without any redeeming feature.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THEISM AS A REFORMATIVE AGENT.

Human progress is marked by diverse forms of belief in the supernatural. As discrimination grew, such belief assumed subtler forms. In an endeavour to explain his existence man shaped numerous theories and fashioned many gods. A closer insight into his method discloses a process of assimilation of preceding notions of godhood, a merger thereof into successive stages of his imagination. The earth was divine. It supplied man with sustenance and was the mother. A later conception of an invisible sustainer in Vishnu linked her as his spouse, second to that mysterious dame, Lakshmi, fickle-minded luck. The moon crescent that ushered the bright prospect lost his native divinity when he later went to decorate the forehead of Siva. Snake-worship that originated in the fatal fang of the Indian cobra was subordinated after snake-charming became an accomplished art. Siva wore snakes as ornaments and Vishnu rested on the coils of a serpent. The varied stages of evolution of animal life appear to lend each its peculiar god. The string of the ten incarnations in Hindu mythology marks the transition of life from the time when liquid earth was yet to throw out the expanse of its crust. Fish, tortoise, and the boar stand for the invertebrate, amphibian and vertebrate forms of life that grew in water, crept ashore, and made a comfortable home in the semi-solid margins of mud and slime. The man-lion brute was ferocious, if discriminating. The acute brain of Vamana, the deceitful stunt, arrived as well. In the land of forests, darkened by aboriginal tribes whom the invading Aryans learnt to despise as Rakshasas, there appeared Parasu Rama, axe in hand. The wood-

feller handed charge to Sri Rama, the epitome of early Aryan purity and love. War resulted from the clash of divergent civilisations, the Aryan and the Dravidian, in which the former won. In a later piping time of peace appeared Balaram, plough in hand. It signified tilling of the soil and tending of cows. The Buddha is the ninth Avatar, an incorporation of a reformer in flesh into the divine fold. The Kalki stands for the prospect of the return of the Lord too frequently bequeathed by ancient religions posthumus realisation.

This process of assembling the pre-existing deities and of assimilation of the prior cults into the new went on until at the end of time their relative positions lost their distinctness. Hinduism to-day is a medley of the diverse elements that contributed their shares. As each element raised its own thoughts, built its own temples, and coined its peculiar ritual and dogma, the confusion arising from an attempt to visualise at a glance what Hinduism really stood for, became considerable. From the lowest forms of animism and demon-worship, to the highest pinnacle of metaphysical speculation and theological doctrine, there is not one shade of thought, one peculiar form of belief that is not represented or lived by in this country. When Vedic ritual and authority drove Buddha into its drastic criticism and the formulation of an atomic theory, Brahminism racked its brains in Sankara whose logic was spent on the restoration of the Vedas, even though at the expense of the cherished hypothesis of a transcendent personal divinity. To the Buddha there was no such god, and human goodness was the ultimate goal. The vacancy of

motive was filled in when Sankara declared "I am the Brahman". As a sociological formula, god non-existent tended to corruption. As a social dictate, the notion of individual godhood fermented egoism and strife. The later reformer, Ramanuja, had therefore to fall back upon a conception of a form of belief in a single personal providence not much apart from the monotheistic doctrines of Christianity and Mahomedanism. There is a god which is not man. But he is not totally unrelated to humanity. Man evolves an existence akin to, but not identical with Him. Providence is interested in human affairs and man's redemption, else men grow indifferent to Him. He is the three in one, an enigma of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva merging in Narayan, not far differing from the relation of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. They are his aspects. He is all-merciful. His kindness is uncaused, i. e., not dependent on the merit of the object, *nirhetuka*. He created the world for his recreation. Mankind owes him to pray.

This is the frame of mind that religion has evolved and is maintaining after centuries of thought, criticism, hewing down and building up. The self-contained Hindu metaphysic had not to borrow monotheism from Mahomedanism when the latter invaded the land. Centuries of Moslem stay interacted on the respective civilisations and manners of life. But the two communities lived in their separate faiths which are as far apart as Benares and Mecca. The amoeba-like tendency of Hindu assimilation would have installed the prophet among the Avatars as an Incarnation, but the fundamental disregard of the Vedas and the exclusiveness of Mahomedanism prevented any such fusion. Brahminism may have composed

Upanishads in praise of Islam while that lenient Moghul, Akbar ruled, but all hopes of treaty-spiritual would have vanished with the orthodox Aurangzeb. Beside a few functions when Hindu devotees pay homage to Mahomedan Pirs, and Hindu youths paint and dance as tigers in Moslem festivities, there is no further inter-religious understanding between them.

Philosophic Hinduism transcended polytheism, animism and the lower cults, long centuries back. The Advaitism of Sankara and the cults of Ramanuja and Madhwa are the sequences that took note of the prior teachings of the Buddha, whose logic was inexorable but whose application to social life was early discovered to be injurious. It is a travesty of events that the rationalist doctrine in Buddhism was exiled from its birthplace while forms of theism found an indifferent harbour, to add to the multitude of swinging sails under an unsteady complex gale. The whirlpool is violent and the direction of the winds none too safe, unless the rudder of rationalism is held firmly in hand.

Another supervening element is afforded by the Christian convert in the country. Missionary enterprise here is mainly composed of forms of Christianity that are elsewhere fast losing ground. The orthodox Catholic faith in creation in six days six thousand years ago is here held good law, geological and biological evidences notwithstanding. The Immaculate Conception, virgin birth, miracles, Old Testament legends, the Resurrection, Ascension and many others whose literal veracity is at best in doubt are freely offered for consumption. Biblical criticism is avoided for fear lest the slender root of prosyletism may not gain ground. The Modernist reinter-

pretation of the Bible finds scant room. Yet, despite vast missionary effort Christian theism did not make a rapid way. As reformatory agents, money more than faith, rice more than religion, play the role. The depressed Panchama takes to conversion for the lift it gives him in the social scale. His house is cleaner and better furnished than before. He is better fed, better clothed. He retains much of his animistic tendency, follows often his native customs and thinks much in his old superstitious groove. Education and doctrine are handmaids to proselytisation, and these reach the superior strata of Hindu life as well. But neither Christian schools nor mission hospitals appear to turn out converts on any appreciable scale. The secular benefits are eagerly received, but the theological portion remains unclaimed. Christian theism will have to travel long before its effects on Indian soil become apparent. Except in so far as it helped to give the human touch to the Pariah outcaste, Christianity is a feeble force for reforming India. Doctrinal faith even at that has little to its account.

That Indian life needs reform in its diverse aspects, social, political and economic, none may question. The impact of western religious thought did not disturb Hinduism as the former was in its turn based on a system of dogma differing merely in form from the spiritual tendencies in the East. There was no novelty about it to stir oriental imagination. The doctrine of Trinity fell flat on familiar ears, the promised return sounded a vain hope. During the century and a half of British history in India, Theism, Hindu, Moslem, Christian or other, seemed to be concerned with preserving the *status quo* rather than aiming

at any drastic reform. Theism, here as elsewhere, is conservatism. It links itself with wealth and power and fights shy of innovation. Christian conservative dogma that laid a halting hand on Indian governance promised religious neutrality and always fulfils the promise. Three quarters of a century ago the Hindu Widow was enabled to remarry but the social atmosphere in that regard is as sullen and dry as ever. Quite recently the Child Marriage Prohibition Act raised an undeserved storm. Even that fragile limb of legislation pauses to be put into active operation. Cult allied to cult, orthodoxy akin to orthodoxy, and power linked to power, that is the crux of the problem. Dislodge theism from the Hindu mind, the Moslem fears that the throne of Allah will shake, and the Christian feels that the Cross will go. India needs all the reform that the world ever needed. But the apologists that carry the cry "Religion in Danger" on their lips demand that any reform should be under the shadow of the idol, the mosque or the church. They keep the gods intact, lest any reform without them may spell disaster.

Mass movements are sustained by emotion more than by reason, by faith more than by reflection. The Mahrattas, the Rajaputs and the Sikhs had their peculiar faiths and deities. Prayers, fasts and offerings for the success of a cause had their beginnings deeper down history than the recent European war when allies prayed for victory against their co-religionists. On the political platform too the appeal is not infrequently made through the vehicle of religion. Providence heareth all, yet doeth nothing! The theosophist who in his study analyses the essence of all religions to draw up a formula of least common denominator,

and the Brahmo that sighs over the ills of a rigid social code to deduce the greatest common measure of social happiness from an all-loving father, tried to make out of this a better and nobler land. Distinct traditions, different modes of life and culture raise incongruous ideas of the godhead. Men are black, white, and yellow and give the colour to their Krishna, Jesus, or Allah. Eliminate the historical accidents, the godhead loses its identity and completeness. What is left is cold abstraction, a universal negation, neither this, that, nor the other.

Back of all ambition at reform there lurks the fear resulting from ignorance that something untoward results from

an abandoned theism. Fear is a primitive emotion and on that rested the stability of faith. The advance of science, unravelling the mystery of the universe helps to displace the unnatural dread for a being whose personality and mercy are at least as doubtful as his design often is mislaid in countless failures and shortcomings. To combat these failures and shortcomings, shaped by poverty and disease, communal strife, immorality, and abuse of power, if theism as reformatory agent is found wanting, the rationalist programme based on experience and independent of orthodox convention may yet be tried.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI

THE VILLAGE ATHEIST.

The Village Atheist ! - most reviled, maligned,
The most calumniated of mankind,
As though a demon, hoofed and horned,
The most discussed, least understood,
The most condemned by bad and "good"
And the most scorned.

He is the man of most renown—
The biggest mystery man in town,
The queerest, strangest and most odd ;
And many a villager shakes his head
And wonders : "Breathes there a man so dead
As to doubt God ? "

The Atheist laughs—but not too loud,
For there is menace in that crowd,
Who tread the paths their fathers trod.
Nor do they heed his thundering shout—
So far above, his voice rings out—
"There is no God."

ROBERT F. HESTER
(Fifth Annual Report of 4A)

WHY DO PEOPLE PRAY ?

Prayer is a habit, and undoubtedly a *bad* habit, because not only does it discourage self-reliance but it makes one a coward. At any rate, a practice so common should be analysed with such discrimination and sympathy as can be given to it by those who have faith in its value. What is prayer? One must at the outset disabuse one's mind and decline to endorse uncritical claims which place the whole credit of prayers to alleged supernatural influence, overlooking the natural and easily explainable reasons by which those influences operate. In a general sense prayer is essentially an appeal, an urgent request for something desired. The phrase "your petitioner will ever pray" is the conventional ending to a petition for favours, privileges, protection or rights unattained but eagerly hoped for. But for "earthly petitions" much depends on the reasonableness of the appeal, on the situation of those making it, and on the character of the persons approached. But the majority of persons who pray presume that their appeals are reasonable and they are approaching the right person for the *successful granting of their appeals*. To anybody with common sense two great assumptions without any solid grounds is simply staggering; yet this is typically the mental attitude of those who pray. They just take for granted the efficacy of prayer and are encouraged in this belief by the priests. There is, of course, no record kept of unanswered prayers; yet, if by any chance an answer appears to have been given to one, generally through the application of natural causes which believers in prayers cannot understand, then the news is broad-cast with the speed of light.

If, however, the prayers are not granted, they take solace in the belief that they are awful sinners and god is still angry with them; it is here that the hawk-eyed priest steps in and exhorts people to greater spiritual effort with cash or other offerings to allay the temper of God, such offerings going the way of all religious offerings, into the priests' bellies some time or other!

The scientific way would, of course, be experiment and verification by impartial and qualified witnesses. Such a test was proposed many years ago by Prof. Tyndall, but the churches refused it knowing full well how such an enquiry would expose their bag of tricks, and put religion, god and priests to open ridicule.

From frequent references to prayer in the Press, in Plays, in Novels, one might gather that the whole world prays. As far as results are concerned, Nature goes its own way without listening to such prayers, because in spite of prayers for rain, it does not rain, or it rains so much that there are floods; in spite of prayers for the recovery of a sick man, he dies; in spite of prayers for no war, armies and navies are being increased hourly and so forth. The observer who is unbiased cannot help noticing that the religious theorist is such a thick-skinned specimen that he is unperturbed by this divine indifference to his prayers; what is more astonishing, is that the religious theorist is *ever ready* to find or make up some specious excuse to explain this divine indifference and will not stop at explaining away things in a manner most convincing to him! In fact, he takes a delight in kidding himself to placate any doubts or misgivings that may naturally arise in

his mind! He goes on hoping, even when the hope has nothing to show for itself. This sort of invincible optimism, if applied in business, would be admirable, but it becomes more a persistence of habit in this case. And is not this habit a survival from the primitive ages when men prayed with desperate earnestness to their tribal gods, their national gods, their supreme gods—all faithfully reflecting man's own attributes,—without the slightest wish to criticise their supposed gifts? Primitive ignorance has been tempered by flashes of reason, but the sad part about it is that the old sense of dependance and helplessness still remains and the flashes of reason are few and far between. "Holy Virgin, have pity on us", "Dadarhormuzd nimadad" and so on are said and heard everywhere.

In the more cultured communities, often prayer has in it a touch of genuineness. Superstitious elements abound, but the clergy have realized that with the spread of education, if the practice of prayer is not freed from its glaring absurdities, the public will have nothing to do with it, and where formerly prayer was confined in the main to appeals for the good things in life, it has now given place to petitions for "spiritual" benefits alone!

Is there any "efficacy" other than subjective, in petitionary prayer? Do prayers thanking god serve any useful purpose except mentally comforting those who pray?

The knowledge of the nature of god, amongst his believers is too meagre to give us any clue as to the way he regards the millions of petitions which are supposed to reach him daily. Not a day passes by without god being prayed to by the

Christians, Mahomedans, Zoroastrians, Hindoos and others. His post-office departments are perhaps like our earthly ones, and those prayers that aren't answered either may not have been properly addressed, or may be stocked in the dead letter office.

Now we have churches holding united prayers for the success of different mundane conferences but with indifferent results. For the success of the Naval Conference of 1930, the Christian Church held united prayers yet it failed! Prayers, united and single, were constantly offered for the guidance of Lord Irwin and others towards the successful solution of the Indian problem; they were also offered for the affectionate unity of the numerous Christian Bodies; but there was no answer. People pray for prosperity and happiness; for fine weather, a good harvest, for rain, for the avoidance and removal of danger, shipwreck and death. If results are favourable, then the prayers are believed to be granted and thanks given to god, while the human or natural medium through which the good things come is seldom noticed. Though the knowledge of the capacity and inclination of the being to whom prayers are offered is of special importance, yet we *know* NOTHING about god. He cannot be conceived rationally as personal. He is a speculation more wild than any on the Stock Exchange? How then can one pray to a supposed being whose qualities one knows so little? God is assumed to be unchangeable, all knowing, all loving and all powerful, yet he is asked by many millions of persons every day to interest himself in the affairs of each individual, selfish as these commonly are, conflicting though they may be with the natural laws! In South Africa or India when there is draught, the Lord is begged for rain, and

when there is too much rain, god is implored not to overdo it! The petitioners would not ascribe to him an ignorance of meteorology, though they sometimes find his knowledge inferior to their own!!!

“One must conclude that a practice which has no assured efficacy is nothing more than a survival possessing no survival value, the tail end of a primitive superstition as old as the hills.”

“The hands that help are better far
Than lips that pray.
Love is our ever-guiding star
That leads the way.
That shines not on vague worlds of
bliss,

But in a paradise like this.”

(R. G. INGERSOLL.)

D. R. D. WADIA.

ANCIENT MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

According to a recent speech by Mr. Justice McCardie:—“No man to day can make himself the owner of a woman under the guise of the marriage service.” This is all true because “Marriages are made in Heaven (or is it Hell),—Where all are free.” In the Proverbs we read, “a prudent wife is from the Lord”, and it was Hall who wrote:—“Consider the old Proverbe to be true that saith:—“Marriage is destinie”. When we speak of the “Marriage Knot” it means the bond of marriage effected by the legal marriage service. The Latin phrase is *Nodus Hercules*, and it must not be forgotten that part of the marriage service in ancient times was for the bridegroom to loosen (*solvere*) the bride’s girdle, not to tie it. In Roman times consent was of the very essence of a valid marriage and religious ceremony a merely accessorial matter designed rather to bring the wife into the power of the husband and initiate her in the *Sacra* of the family. Later mere dissent would suffice to dissolve the marriage state, with the inevitable result of a moral laxity that probably paved the way for

Christian teaching. The oldest Roman form of marriage was called “*confarreatio*,” the name and ceremony being derived from the time-honoured association of Marriage with the cultivation of Corn. “*Confarreatio*” was a purely religious ceremony conducted by the state High Priests in the presence of ten witnesses representing the 10 *curiæ* of the bridegroom’s tribe, and later was especially contra-distinguished from the civil form, “*Usus*”, or cohabitation with the intention of forming a marriage. The “*confarriate*” form of marriage was competent only to those patricians who had the privileges of the *jus sacrum*, and hence patricians and plebians could not at one time inter-marry.

The peculiarity of the old Roman forms of marriage was that they did not themselves constitute the *Tie*! They merely decided the position of the wife so far as the question of subjection to her husband’s power was concerned.

For a long period a Roman citizen could not lawfully marry a freed woman or any other than a Roman citizen though it will be recalled that Antony braved

the great Cicero's reproach by marrying Fulvia the daughter of a freed man, and later, public detestation by marrying his third wife, Cleopatra—a foreigner. But in A. D. 9, after the extension of citizenship by the celebrated *Lex Papia Poppaea*, Romans were permitted freely to intermarry with foreigners and freed men. By the time of Justinian, marriage was a purely commutual relationship subsisting only so long as the parties mutually consented to live with each other.

With the Ancient Greeks, the nuptial ceremony was a symbolic representation of the forcible carrying away of the bride, by way of allusion it seems, to the Greek tradition that a bridegroom should only be entitled to his bride by performing some heroic feat or subtle stratagem:—*e.g.* the mythical hero. Theseus is famous for the traditional abduction of Helena, daughter of Leda. On the wedding day, the betrothed pair having laved themselves in water drawn from some special fountain went to the temple followed by friends singing paeans of praise. Sacrifices were made at the altar, and the bride, at least, if of the wealthier classes, was conducted to her new home in the evening in a chariot drawn by oxen or mules.

According to the Chinese, marriage goes by destiny. The solemnization of marriage is always preceded by three days mourning during which time all the relatives abstain from every kind of amusement. The reason for this custom being that the Chinese regard the marriage of their offspring as a presage of their own death.

Among the ancient Hebrews, according to Scripture, the custom of purchasing brides prevailed among the descendants

of Abraham, and undoubtedly the custom still exists in many parts of the East. The alternative for a poor man was to obtain a bride by servitude. Conformably with oriental custom, espousals began at a very early age. Children of 12 years of age were competent to marry. The Bride's hair was always disposed in ringlets, and so has been frequently compared to that of goats on Mount Gilead. After the marriage ceremony there was the usual procession with dancing and music by torchlight to the groom's house, the pair walking or being borne along under a canopy. Everyone who met the procession gave place to it. At the marriage supper the table honours were performed by the "Architriclinus" or governor of the feast (See Ecclesiastes 31-1-2) and (John II 8, 9).

Among the ancient Britons a daughter was obliged to marry whomsoever her father selected for her husband. Courtship was of very short duration, and the marriage was celebrated at a "Cromlech" in the open air, while sacrifices were offered by the Druid priests. Polygamy was practised. A "Cromlech" was a circle of upright stons as at Stonehenge. And even to this day in parts of wild Wales as in Cardiganshire, the old custom of giving "bidding letters" intimating an intended marriage, its date, and the intent of the parties to make a "bidding", at some inn, to ask for the pleasure of the company and support of the parties to whom the letters were sent—is almost universal. There is also in my country the old custom called "Purse and girdle" by which the bride's goods comprising generally of an oak chest and feather bed, are taken on the day before the marriage to the bride-groom's house while the groom in the evening receives gifts. Cardigan weddings are

characterised by a procession of friends headed by a harper or fiddler. Spectators rain colossal quantities of rice on the happy pair. The practice of throwing rice is Indian or rather Aryan, and rice is an emblem of fecundity. The old Egyptians and Romans threw corn over their heads.

Finally, we may note the ancient custom which was long prevalent in Scotland called "hand fasting" whereby a man and woman could pledge themselves to each other for exactly a year and a day by joining of hands. If at the end of that time the woman was neither a mother nor pregnant the man need not make her his wife. Sir Walter Scott describes the custom in his book "The Monastery". The custom was suppressed after the Reformation. "Creeling the bridegroom" was also a popular Scotch custom. A Creel or wicker basket was placed on the bridegroom's back and a long pole with a broom affixed, laid over his left shoulder. So burdened, he was expected to run a race while the strength of the bride's affections was estimated according to the degree of eagerness she showed to free him from his encumbrance. Among the Highlanders it used to be customary for the company to

retain possession of the dwelling house or cottage of the pair for the first night, while the latter were relegated to some barn or outhouse (Roger "Scotland"). According to Sir John Sinclair's "Statistical account of Scotland," (1794) couples chose each other at some time-honoured fair and after a year of cohabitation they continued together for life if such probationary period proved mutually satisfactory. If not, they separated and the disaffected one was saddled with the issue. If each was disaffected the husband had the issue. There was also an old peasant custom of betrothal by mutual licking of and pressing of the right thumbs, accompanied by a vow of fidelity. Betrothal by hands clasped across a brook, in which the pair had previously bathed, has a more "spiritual flavour" about it, and is celebrated as a ceremony that took place between the immortal Burns and "Highland Mary". It seems that all these including the "Scotch Penny Weddings" degenerated in the 17th century into scenes of violent disorder and in 1645 they were condemned by the General Assembly, presumably because in the opinion of that body such weddings were "made in Hell".

J. D. JENKINS.

WHAT SOME PEOPLE CAN BELIEVE.

Mr. V. D. Rishi, B. A., LL. B., who makes annual trips to Europe to represent Indian gullibles at Spiritist Conferences contributes valuable information (!) from the other world to a local Marathi weekly. Comment is hardly necessary, except that there seem to be no limits to gullibility. Here is a sample from an issue dated 5th March :—

“My daughter Pramila died about 14 years back before she was an year old. It seems she continued to grow up in the other world and was taken care of by other people till my wife died some years later and then I was able to get into communication with her.....It seems the other world resembles this world in some respects. One must read these accounts impartially and think over them and then one sees that they are true. If one ridicules them, the subject loses its seriousness and one cannot get any knowledge. When I asked my daughter, she gave me the following information about a hermitage. ‘There is a large open area and a garden, with a building in it, divided into 7 parts. The first is for prayer, the second for learning how to prepare the mind for prayer, the third for learning all subjects, the fourth for meals, the fifth for penance. One must pray every day. We are also taught Sanscrit. The sixth is for teachers, the seventh for gardening.’ A model boarding school, it seems. How many languages does God know! In the next paragraph the writer has forgotten to specify whether they use Indian Standard Time in the other world. Or is there such a thing as Heavenly Standard Time?

“She gave the following account of her

daily duties :—‘ We have to get up at 4-30 and be ready for prayer at 5. This lasts one hour. Then I have to go to the temple with a teacher and return by 7-30. Then we read religious and other books for half an hour. They are not made of paper, but leaves or bark of trees (how backward!).....‘ We sleep from 12 to 4 only. Boys and girls are not together ‘ (They have not yet discovered co-education!)

“ If the parents of a child are not dead, it is always looked after by other dead relatives. There are innumerable messages from the dead to convince one about this.”

After this, one wonders if in the other world as here, India is still under the British Government! The colossal stupidity that can make such beliefs possible can hardly be imagined.

A Poona monthly for children wants them to answer some questions and, to make sure that they will be truthful, asks them to ‘remember God’ before they write the answers. What is the psychological process by which one can remember things one has never known? And does this not imply that one may tell lies when one does not remember God?

Mr. Rishi, quoted above, assures people that if a child dies just after a school examination, it is promoted to the next standard in the other world. There is a saying in French that two astrologers cannot look at each other without a smile. What happens when two mediums or their business managers meet?

R. D. KARVE.

EXPLAINING RELIGION.

Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the Free-thinker of 7th February, 1932 answering the questions raised by a South Country Vicar after reading Mr. Cohen's "God and the Universe," writes as follows:—

First, let me clear away what I think is a confusion with regard to the assumed likeness between the changes that take place in scientific theory and those which take place in religious belief. Every scientific theory is put forward as an attempted explanation of experience. It is built upon experience and has no other validity or use save as an explanation of experience, to be modified or rejected as further experience demands. Finally, it is to be noted that the changes in scientific theory arise from science itself. Science is self-purificatory and applies its own methods of development.

Religious theory, on the other hand, is not put forward as a tentative explanation, but as a final one. It does not claim to rest upon experience, but to be superior to it. It does not offer itself as something which is to be *checked at every step* by experience, it resists every attempt at modification and denounces the rejection of its teaching as in itself a sin. Finally, the so-called "purification" of religion does not come from within, but from without. A religion never tells its followers that they must rightly test its teachings, and reject them the moment a wider and truer knowledge shows them to be inadequate and false. The demand for verification in itself suggests scepticism and is marked as wrong. The work of science is to find out what is truth, and it has no other possible interest than the discovery of truth. The work of religion is to preach what it calls "the truth," and it fights for its perpetuation. Scientific

teaching is modernized from within; religion is modernized from without. Changes in scientific teaching make it more truly scientific; changes in religion make it less truly religious. Science persists by expansion; religion persists by contraction. Every extension of positive knowledge give science a greater strength; it just as inevitably leads to a religious weakening. In actual practice one need only note the way in which the Christian Churches receive a man who asks for a modification of accepted teaching and the honour paid a scientist who demonstrates that something taught in the name of science is false. Religion builds upon human weakness; science upon human strength.

How It Is Done.

Now let me come to my statement that religion is to-day explained out of existence, a statement which my critic rightly regards as first-rate importance. If I am right in this then the whole case for religion crumbles into dust. If I am right, then there is simply no case for the truth of religion, but only an enquiry as to how religious beliefs came into existence, and what are the causes that have led to their perpetuation. To put my position briefly and brutally, my claim is that modern science has wiped out altogether the question of whether the belief in God and a soul, in heaven and hell, in angels and devils is true; we *know* they are not true. In the light of modern knowledge all the religious apologies put forward on behalf of these things are so many fantastic irrelevancies. They have no real relation to the facts of the situation.

Religion as a whole differs from science as a whole, not because it deals with

a different set of facts, but because of the different interpretation it places upon the same set of facts. The world in which we live is the same world, whether we are theistic or atheistic. The human nature that contemplates that world is the same whether it is theistic or atheistic. There is not a feeling, an impulse, a quality that is possessed by the Theist that is not possessed by the Atheist. There is no difference in substance either in the world or in man, there is a difference only in the interpretation placed upon the same facts. It is this that stamps one interpretation religious and the other non-religious. The essence of the difference between Atheist and Theist is a difference of interpretation of facts that are common to both.

Look now at the facts upon which we know religion to base itself. These really cover the whole range of human nature and of nature at large. There are the facts of natural phenomena, every one of which were at one time interpreted in terms of religion. In the world of human nature we meet with the same thing. The religious value placed by all religions, primitive and modern, upon states of ecstasy, sometimes induced by fasting, or by practices that involve some disturbance of the normal functioning of the nervous system, the interpretation of disease as due to the possession by evil agencies, the religious interpretation of epilepsy and insanity have all gone to build up the sense of the truth of religion. If we pass from abnormal states to normal ones we have the same thing evidenced. Nearly forty years ago I pointed out the close relation between what is called conversion and the period of adolescence. Since then the line has been followed by many investigators both

in this and in other countries, with the result of establishing the truth that conversion is mainly the interpretation in terms of religion of the developing sexual and social life of youth.

There is the same conclusion if we take the whole idea of the supernatural—of Gods big and little, local or universal, and of the survival of the "soul." Some seventy years of patient and trained observation all over the world of uncivilized peoples, and their comparison with surviving practices amongst civilized ones, has left no room for doubt that early religious ideas root themselves in man's inevitable ignorance of the nature of what is going on around him. Whatever may be the difference of opinion on points of detail, there is a very substantial agreement on the one point that early religious ideas rest on no other and no better foundation than a misinterpretation of well understood facts, both objective and subjective. And beyond this it is a mere matter of historical study to prove that existing religious beliefs as surely base themselves on the misinterpretations of primitive humanity as it is certain that the developed human form may be traced back to a primitive animal structure. With religion, however, it is not a case of putting an early structure to new uses, and so making the best of the situation, but a matter of persisting in conclusions that are drawn from admittedly false premises.

We have thus to face the plainest of plain facts. Either we must admit that the world-wide conclusions of anthropologists are wrong; deny that primitive religious beliefs did originate in the manner these men describe, and deny also that modern religious beliefs have not descended from primitive ones, or we must admit that the study of religion is fundamentally the study of a delusion.

There is, in this last event no room for a discussion of the truth of existence of God or a soul or of any phase of the supernatural. There is no room for even Agnosticism, for there is nothing to be Agnostic about. That illogical camouflage of Victorian timidity is dissipated by the recognition of the real nature of the problem before us. Once we realize that the belief in gods and ghosts began in a misunderstanding of facts that are now differently interpreted, all that is left is a discussion as to how the misunderstanding arose. Religion today is a question of psychology.

Clearing the Ground.

Now in all this I am applying to religion nothing but the most elementary rules of common sense, and putting into force a procedure which is everywhere else adopted. If a man visits a doctor and complains of hearing noises which he attributes to evil spirits, and on examination he is found to be suffering from some disease of the ear, the doctor pays not the least attention to the patient's claim that they are real voices. He admits the fact—the noises—but finds another and a better interpretation. When on the strength of certain observed facts the sun was believed to go round the earth, we had, again, a fact and an interpretation. But when it was shown that a better understanding of the fact led to the conclusion that the earth went round the sun, the old interpretation was discarded. In every case when we know the facts—neural disorder, or a misunderstanding of normal experience—upon which a delusion or wrong interpretation is based, and have another and a more correct interpretation to hand, we have done with the old one. In this way there has been explained away fairies and demons, witches and warlocks. They have been explained out of existence. Why may not the same rule be applied to religion? If we know the kind of expe-

rience that led men to believe in the supernatural, and if we now explain that experience in a way which leaves the supernatural out altogether, what reason have we to still accept an interpretation of things which we admit to have been quite wrong?

It is, I hope, now quite plain why I say that modern thought explains religion out of existence. It does this by taking all the facts upon which religious belief is based and showing, not merely that the religious explanation is wrong, but also that its wrongness is everywhere accepted in the world of science. And all my life I have been asking religious and semi-religious people to face this simple issue; and up to the present I have never met anyone who would face fairly the situation. Whether my present critic will I do not know, but I am quite certain that if he consults his brother clerics they will give him the advice that has been so often given in such circumstances, "Better leave him alone." It should also be plain why I insist that the apologies offered for the truth of religion, the arguments for the existence of a God or of a soul, are no more than a tissue of fantastic irrelevancies. They are so many excuses for continuing to profess a belief that has completely exploded. The argument that changes in religion are on all-fours with changes in science does not fit the case, first for the reasons I have already given, second, because when a new interpretation of a given set of facts is adopted, the old one should be discarded. They cannot both be right. The facts upon which religion is based are there, the common property of believer and unbeliever. It is the interpretation of the facts that separates the primitive from the truly modern mind. If you do not accept modern science you may still hold to the world of the savage; but you cannot logically and honestly believe in both.

AT THE SECRETARIES' TABLE.

The Annual General Meeting followed by a Social was held at the Taj Mahal Hotel on Sunday, the 20th March, at 5 p. m. This meeting was better attended than the previous ones and we trust the members will keep up their interest. From a perusal of the report which is published elsewhere, the members will realise that the financial position of the Association is not very strong. There is no lack of sympathy with the movement both amongst members and non-members. Especially from the latter, we get any number of letters and suggestions, of course very friendly, but it is very rarely that an annual subscription follows. We want all those that have any sympathy with the movement to join now at the beginning. At the meeting, some members said that they would try and get more of their friends to join. If all should do the same, then we will make a greater headway. If it is not possible to do anything more, they should let us have the addresses of their friends who are interested in the movement, and we can follow them up with "Reason." At the moment, we are sending copies to many non-members, but probably a good number of them fall on very barren soil. This list of probables would be a great help. Since at the moment, we have no other sources of income, a rapid increase in membership is the most urgent need of the Association.

"Reason" is slowly forging ahead: recently there were references to it in "The Truthseeker" of America and in "The Freethinker" of London.

Mr. Charles Smith, President of the American Association for the Advance-

ment of Atheism, has become a member of our Association and has been kind enough to send us sample copies of the many tracts that his Association publishes at very cheap rates. The literature is interesting and instructive. The address of the Association is:—"The 4A, 307E, 14th Street, New York."

We have also received the "Birth Control Review" published by the American Birth Control League and the "Open Road, published by Bruce Calvert. These journals are in the library.

The following are our new members:—
Dr. S. M. Joshi, S. Cornelius, Charles Smith, Dr. B. P. Shukla, Dr. P. M. Wagle, Dr. Nerurkar, R. Moraes, D. S. Erulkar, and A. P. Da Costa.

The Belief of a Modernist.

He is "modern" in his attitude to religion because he holds that religion, like art and science, ought to and must progress as human experience grows. The modernist, however, has no great belief in religion in the abstract and *in vacuo*; he believes in it as embodied in the European religious tradition, and in the Christian Church. He regards the Christian Church as an embodiment of a religious tradition which goes back to the beginnings of European civilization, and which indeed inspired that civilisation.

REV. J. C. HARDWICK
in Literary Guide.

A SILLY ATTACK ON RATIONALISM.

"With the object of spreading rationalism in India, Dr. R. P. Paranjpye has written a book entitled "The Crux of the Indian Problem" (Watts and Co., London, Re. 1). Throughout its pages he attempts to show religion has been a stumbling block in the way of the healthy progress of the human race. Taking India in particular, he says that too great a subservience to religious authority has been the country's bane, the root-cause of the many ills from which she is now suffering. There was a time when science and religion were openly antagonistic, but this antagonism has gradually mollified and today there are signs of reconciliation. Rationalism may be a splendid way of facing and investigating facts and beliefs, but more often than not Rationalism proceeds on assumptions which transgress the very laws of reasoning against which it claims to wage war. At a time when the world is sadly out of joint and when morality is assailed by various insidious factors, books like the one written by Dr. Paranjpye are capable of doing incalculable harm, especially amongst those who are not as mentally robust and well equipped as the author". This is how the Illustrated Weekly of The Times of India of 13th March, comments on a work that has been received very favourably by many papers and periodicals in England and India. The writer of this attack is one of the types that one meets often, who repeats fallacious assertions or opinions on rationalism. The fallacies in this short note are so absurd, that only an ill informed critic could commit such matter to print, so unguardedly. He says that religion and science are getting more and more reconciled. Everyone familiar with the conflict between religion and science will admit that such is not the case. Some

mystics, speaking in the name of science, do make such assertions; interested religious persons avidly seize upon such statements to make believe that all is not well with religion. When a scientist like Sir Oliver Lodge or Sir Arthur Eddington, who is not qualified to speak in the name of all sciences, makes such an assertion he is probably very far from meaning that by religion he means Christianity and all the superstitions and supernaturalism it teaches. At most he means some vague power behind nature or that certain ethical doctrines of Christianity are not in contradiction with science.

The second fallacy is that Rationalism is unreasonable in some of its teachings. Ask for some typical examples and you will at once recognize the man who is not able to mention any. He has only been repeating parrot-like what he has heard others say on the subject and he thinks that this entitles him to pass his opinion on it though he knows practically nothing about it.

The third fallacy is even more ridiculous—It is the insinuation that Rationalism is likely to do more harm than good in the world now that there is an alleged moral instability prevailing. Were he conversant with what Rationalism has already done towards the progress of civilisation and moral elevation, he might have refrained from talking such nonsense. Rationalism does not appeal to people who are morally unstable. There are religious people who would resent being called Rationalists. Rationalism appeals to people who strive to live worthily, people with lofty ethical principles who look upon superstition that religion encourages as one of the curses that afflict mankind.

C. L. D.

WHAT IS RELIGION ?

(Last public address of Col. Ingersoll and delivered at Boston, on June 2, 1899.)

It is asserted that an infinite God created all things, governs all things, and that the creature should be obedient and thankful to the creator; that the creator demands certain things, and that the person who complies with these demands is religious. This kind of religion has been substantially universal.

For many centuries and by many peoples it was believed that this God demanded sacrifices; that he was pleased when parents shed the blood of their babes. Afterwards it was supposed that he was satisfied with the blood of oxen, lambs and doves, and that in exchange for or on account of these sacrifices, this God gave rain, sunshine and harvest. It was also believed that if the sacrifices were not made, this God sent pestilence, famine, flood and earthquake.

The last phase of this belief in sacrifice was, according to the Christian doctrine, that God accepted the blood of his son, and that after his son had been murdered, he, God, was satisfied, and wanted no more blood.

During all these years and by all these peoples it was believed that this God heard and answered prayer, that he forgave sins and saved the souls of true believers. This in a general way, is the definition of religion.

Now the questions are:—Whether religion was founded on any known facts? Whether such a being as God exists? Whether he was the Creator of yourself and myself? Whether any prayer was ever answered? Whether any sacrifice of babe or ox secured the favour of this unseen God?

First—Did an infinite God create the children of men?

Why did he create the intellectually inferior?

Why did he create the deformed and helpless?

Why did he create the criminal, the idiotic, the insane?

Can infinite wisdom and power make any excuse for the creation of failures?

Are the failures under obligation to their creator?

Second—Is an infinite God the governor of this world?

Is he responsible for all the chiefs, kings, emperors, and queens?

Is he responsible for all the wars that have been waged, for all the innocent blood that has been shed?

Is he responsible for the centuries of slavery, for the backs that have been scarred with the lash, for the babes that have been sold from the breasts of mothers, for the families that have been separated and destroyed?

Is this God responsible for religious persecution, for the Inquisition, for the thumb-screw and rack, and for all the instruments of torture?

Did this God allow the cruel and vile to destroy the brave and virtuous? Did he allow tyrants to shed the blood of patriots?

Did he allow his enemies to torture and burn his friends?

What is such a God worth?

Would a decent man, having the power to prevent it, allow his enemies to torture and burn his friends?

Can we conceive of a devil base enough to prefer his enemies to his friends?

If a good and infinitely powerful God governs this world, how can we account

for cyclones, earthquakes, pestilence and famine?

How can we account for cancers, for microbes, for diphtheria and the thousand diseases that prey on infancy?

How can we account for the wild beasts that devour human beings, for the fanged serpents whose bite is death?

How can we account for a world where life feeds on life?

Were beak and claw, tooth and fang, invented and produced by infinite mercy?

Did infinite goodness fashion the wings of the eagles so that their fleeing prey could be overtaken?

Did infinite goodness create the beasts of prey with the intention that they should devour the weak and helpless?

Did infinite goodness create the countless worthless living things that breed within and feed upon the flesh of higher forms?

Did infinite wisdom intentionally produce the microscopic beasts that feed upon the optic nerve?

Think of blinding a man to satisfy the appetite of a microbe!

Think of life feeding on life! Think of the victims! Think of the Niagara of blood pouring over the precipice of cruelty!

In view of these facts, what, after all, is religion?

It is fear.

Fear builds the altar and offers the sacrifice.

Fear erects the cathedral and bows the head of man in worship.

Fear bends the knees and utters the prayer.

Fear pretends to love.

Religion teaches the slave-virtues—obedience, humility, self-denial, forgiveness, non-resistance.

Lips, religious and fearful, tremblingly repeat this passage: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." This is the abyss of degradation.

Religion does not teach self-reliance, independence, manliness, courage, self-defence. Religion makes God a master and man his serf. The master cannot be great enough to make slavery sweet.

If this God exists, how do we know that he is good? How can we prove that he is merciful, that he cares for the children of men? If this God exists, he has on many occasions seen millions of his poor children ploughing the fields, sowing and planting the grain, and when he saw them he knew that they depended on the expected crop for life, and yet this good God, this merciful being, withheld the rain. He caused the sun to rise, to steal all moisture from the land, but gave no rain. He saw the seeds that man had planted wither and perish, but he sent no rain. He saw the people look with sad eyes upon the barren earth, and he sent no rain. He saw them slowly devour the little that they had, and saw them when the days of hunger came—saw them slowly waste away, saw their hungry, sunken eyes, heard their prayers, saw them devour the miserable animals that they had, saw fathers and mothers, insane with hunger, kill and eat their shrivelled babies, and yet the heaven above them was as brass and the earth beneath as iron, and he sent no rain. Can we say that in the heart of this God there blossomed the flower of pity? Can we say that he cared for the children of men? Can we say that his mercy endureth forever?

Do we prove that this God is good because he sends the cyclone that wrecks villages and covers the fields with the mangled bodies of fathers, mothers and

babes? Do we prove his goodness by showing that he has opened the earth and swallowed thousands of his helpless children, or that with the volcanoes he has overwhelmed them with rivers of fire? Can we infer the goodness of God from the facts we know?

If these calamities did not happen, would we suspect that God cared nothing for human beings? If there were no famine, no pestilence, no cyclone, no earthquake, would we think that God is not good?

According to the theologians, God did not make all men alike. He made races differing in intelligence, stature and color. Was there goodness, was there wisdom in this?

Ought the superior races to thank God that they are not the inferior? If we say yes, then I ask another question: Should the inferior races thank God that they are not superior, or should they thank God that they are not beasts?

When God made these different races he knew that the superior would enslave the inferior, knew that the inferior would be conquered, and finally destroyed.

If God did this, and knew the blood that would be shed, the agonies that would be endured, saw the countless fields covered with the corpses of the slain, saw all the bleeding backs of slaves, all the broken hearts of mothers bereft of babes, if he saw and knew all this, can we conceive of a more malicious fiend?

Why, then, should we say that God is good?

The dungeons against whose dripping walls the brave and generous have sighed their souls away, the scaffolds stained and glorified with noble blood, the hopeless slaves with scarred and bleeding backs, the writhing martyrs clothed in flame, the

virtuous stretched on racks, their joints and muscles torn apart, the flayed and bleeding bodies of the just, the extinguished eyes of those who sought for truth, the countless patriots who fought and died in vain, the burdened, beaten, weeping wives, the shrivelled faces of neglected babes, the murdered millions of the vanished years, the victims of the winds and waves, of flood and flame, of imprisoned forces in the earth, of lightning's stroke, of lava's molten stream, of famine, plague and lingering pain, the mouths that drip with blood, the fangs that poison, the beaks that wound and tear, the triumphs of the base, the rule and sway of wrong, the crowns that cruelty has worn and the robed hypocrites, with clasped and bloody hands, who thanked their God—a phantom fiend—that liberty had been banished from the world, these souvenirs of the dreadful past, these horrors that still exist, these frightful facts deny that any God exists who has the will and power to guard and bless the human race.

Most people cling to the supernatural. If they give up one God, they imagine another. Having outgrown Jehovah, they talk about the power that works for righteousness.

What is this power?

Man advances, and necessarily advances through experience. A man wishing to go to a certain place comes to where the road divides. He takes the left hand, believing it to be the right road, and travels until he finds that it is the wrong one. He retraces his steps and takes the right hand road and reaches the place desired. The next time he goes to the same place, he does not take the left hand road. He has tried that road, and knows that is the wrong road. He takes the

right road, and thereupon these theologians say, "There is a power that works for righteousness."

A child, charmed by the beauty of the flame, grasps it with its dimpled hand. The hand is burned, and after that the child keeps its hand out of the fire. The power that works for righteousness has taught the child a lesson.

The accumulated experience of the world is a power and force that works for righteousness. This force is not conscious, not intelligent. It has no will, no purpose. It is a result.

So thousands have endeavoured to establish the existence of God by the fact that we have what is called the moral sense; that is to say, a conscience.

It is insisted by these theologians, and by many of the so-called philosophers, that this moral sense, this sense of duty, of obligation, was imported, and that conscience is an exotic. Taking the ground that it was not produced here, was not produced by man, they then imagine a God from whom it came.

Man is a social being. We live together in families, tribes and nations.

The members of a family, of a tribe, of a nation, who increase the happiness of the family, of the tribe or of the nation, are considered good members. They are praised, admired and respected. They are regarded as good; that is to say, as moral.

The members who add to the misery of the family, the tribe or the nation, are considered bad members. They are blamed, despised, punished. They are regarded as immoral.

The family, the tribe, the nation, creates a standard of conduct, of morality. There is nothing supernatural in this.

The greatest of human beings has said, "Conscience is born of love."

The sense of obligation, of duty, was naturally produced.

Among savages, the immediate consequences of actions are taken into consideration. As people advance, the remote consequences are perceived. The standard of conduct becomes higher. The imagination is cultivated. A man puts himself in the place of another. The sense of duty becomes stronger, more imperative. Man judges himself.

He loves, and love is the commencement, the foundation of the highest virtues. He injures one that he loves. Then comes regret, repentance, sorrow, conscience. In all this there is nothing supernatural.

Man has deceived himself. Nature is a mirror in which man sees his own image, and all supernatural religions rest on the pretence that the image, which appears to be behind this mirror, has been caught.

All the metaphysicians of the spiritual type, from Plato to Swedenborg, have manufactured their facts, and all founders of religion have done the same.

Suppose that an infinite God exists, what can we do for him? Being infinite, he is conditionless; being conditionless, he cannot be benefited or injured. He cannot want. He has.

Think of the egotism of a man who believes that an infinite being wants his praise!

What has our religion done? Of course, it is admitted by Christians that all other religions are false, and consequently we need examine only our own. Has Christianity done good? Has it made men nobler, more merciful, nearer honest? When the Church had control, were men made better and happier?

(To be continued.)

THE ANNUAL REPORT

For year ending 31st December, 1931.

Office-Bearers.

<i>President—</i>	Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, M.D., F.R.C.S.,
<i>Vice-President—</i>	A. S. Tyebji, Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, M.D.,
<i>Hony. Treasurer—</i>	D. R. D. Wadia, Bar-at-Law,
<i>Members.—</i>	Dr. A. S. Erulkar, M.D., S. A. Brelvi, M.A., LL.B., M. A. Someji, Bar-at-Law, M. R. P. Masani, Bar-at-Law, P. Tricumdas, Bar-at-Law, M. H. Vakil, M.A., LL.B., S. Megherian, Miss P. Nariman, C. J. Shah, C. D. Vyas, B.A., LL.B.,
<i>Hony. Secretaries.—</i>	Dr. G. Coelho, M.B., M.R.C.P. J. M. Cooper,

Members:—The year started with 62 Members, of whom three were life members, 43 ordinary members, and 16 student members. It ended with 159 members, of whom four are life members, 117 ordinary members, and 38 student members. One member resigned after the change of name. Some of those who joined as student members are no more students and we hope they will join the Association as ordinary members.

Subscriptions :—The total amount of subscriptions received during the year was Rs. 546-12. A sum of Rs. 78-12 is still outstanding. We hope the members will kindly pay up the arrears.

Activities :—The most important activity is the publication of "Reason". It was launched as a Quarterly in July, 1931, but in response to the repeated response from members, it was converted into a Monthly from October. Dr. C. L. D'Avoine has been doing the duties of the Editor.

2. The Annual Dinner was held at the Radio Club in July. It was open to members and their friends. It was largely attended. Mr. Tyebji presided at the dinner.

A Social was held at Mongini's Restaurant on the 15th of November. About fifty persons were present. There was a short discussion on the scope of rationalistic propaganda in India.

Mr. M. H. Vakil gave a lecture on "Is marriage a sacrament" and Prof. Karve on "Obscenity Laws." Both of them were well attended.

A prize of Rs. 50/- was offered for the best essay on any subject of interest to Rationalists in India, and Prof. R. D. Karve was awarded the prize. The money for the prize was collected mainly by contributions from amongst members.

A library has been started and is placed at the office of the Association. Books have been donated by Messrs. D. R. D. Wadia, R. B. Lotvala, R. D. Dalal and Dr. D'Avoine. Lt.-Col. Sanjana sends us a copy of The Free-Thinker. We would be very happy if more members made use of the library.

Mr. P. Tricumdas attempted to stage his social reform play "Nyaya" at the Royal Opera House, but was frustrated by violence on the part of the orthodox section of the Parsee community.

Messrs. Cornelius and Davar have again acted as our Honorary Auditors and we are very grateful to them for their services.

We also thank Dr. D'Avoine for his services as Editor, Messrs. Wadia, Lotvala, Dalal, and Lt.-Col. Sanjama for their gifts to the library, and those members and friends who have contributed to the special prize fund.

We were deprived of the services of Mr. Brelvi and Mr. P. Tricumdas for some time because of their incarceration in jail during the last civil disobedience movement.

GEO. COELHO,
J. M. COOPER,

Jt. Hony. Secretaries

Receipts and Payments A/c for the year ending 31st December 1931.

RECEIPTS :—	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
To, Balance at Bank—1-1-31	...			1,041	4	0
„ Subscriptions :—						
Life Membership	...	100	0	0		
Annual ordinary membership	...	370	0	0		
„ „ „ 1932	...	70	0	0		
Annual students' membership	...	6	12	0		
				546	12	0
„ Donations :—						
General	...	16	0	0		
For Essay Fund and Prizes	...	45	0	0		
				61	0	0
„ Subscriptions for Dinner	...			281	7	0
„ Magazine "Reason" :—						
Sales and subscriptions	...	16	9	0		
Advertisements	...	187	0	0		
				203	9	0
„ Bank interest	...			28	14	6
„ Sundry Deposits	...			10	0	0
				Total Rs.	2,172	14 0
PAYMENTS :—	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
By, Advertisements, Postages, etc.	...			133	5	6
Furniture and Fittings	...			38	0	0
Magazine "Reason" Printing, etc.	...			614	6	0
Printing Annual Report	...			38	6	0
Cost of Dinner	...			301	11	0
Bank Charges and Commission	...			1	12	0
Refund of Deposits	...			10	0	0
„ Cash and other Balances :—						
Cash in hand	...	0	12	0		
Balance at Central Bank of India on						
Current A/c on 31-12-1931	...	1,034	9	6		
				1,035	5	6
				Total Rs.	2,172	14 0

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting of the members of the Association was held at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, on the 20th March, at 5 p. m. Dr. Deshmukh occupied the chair.

After reading and confirming the minutes of the last annual general meeting, the Secretary read the report and the statement of accounts and their adoption was duly proposed and seconded and passed unanimously.

The President, Vice.-Presidents, Hony. Treasurer, the Hony. Secretaries and the ordinary members of the Committee were reelected. However, in place of Mr. S. A. Brelvi and P. Tricumdas whose imprisonment would not permit them to function for some time, the house agreed and elected Mr. R. D. Karve and J. M. Gast as substitute members on the proposal of Mr. Masani. Mr. C. M. Sharma and Mr. P. C. Pereira were elected as student members.

The following alterations in the constitution were then agreed to:—

To omit in section 3 para 4 "all subscriptions are renewable in January every year."

To omit in section 4 line 5 "It shall meet atleast once a month to conduct

the business of the association. At these meetings six persons shall form a quorum." and to substitute "it shall meet atleast once in two months and at these meetings five persons shall form a quorum."

Mr. Gast, with the permission of the President, moved "That the Committee should work out a scheme whereby members may pay a monthly contribution in proportion to their income." A discussion ensued wherein the difficulty of putting such a resolution into practice was emphasised, though it was admitted that the financial position of the Association needed a lot of strengthening. An amendment was moved "That the Committee should study ways and means to increase the income of the Association" and was passed as a substantive proposition.

At the suggestion of Mr. Lobo, the President in a short speech appreciated the services of Mr. Brelvi and Mr. Tricumdas to the Association.

With a vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting terminated. After the meeting there was a social, which members and their friends attended.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

Dean Inge gave a series of addresses on Religion and Life at the St. Paul's Cathedral. His congregation consisted of clergymen, business girls, and men from City offices, and people in every walk of life. Many questions were put to the Dean. "The Daily Express" reports that while dealing with the question of evil, the Dean said "There is monstrous injustice and cruelty and wrong every-where. One thinks of such crime as that poor little child who was murdered the other day, and thinks of torturing diseases which often attack men who have done nothing to deserve them, and one thinks of such hideous wrongs as war. Well I cannot answer these questions satisfactorily. I only think that for a brave man the difficulties are not insuperable. There is a great deal of good in the world, and if a man has courage and determines to live and die as Christ's faithful soldier and go through life like a soldier in a campaign he will be able to bear his own sufferings and even not to be too much dismayed at the sufferings of other people. The child pictured God as an old man with a beard sitting on a throne somewhere in space that we could go to

in an aeroplane if we knew the way. But God could not be a person in the sense that we were persons. We are now told by the astronomers like Jeans and Eddington that the whole universe is running down like a clock. They say sooner or later the end must be the annihilation of matter. Very well, if the world is coming to an end, and if God is organic with the world, as some think, then God must die too. Surely a God who is under sentence of death is no God at all. I think the belief in a personal God and Creator is easier to believe than any other theory." One wonders if the young and old that listened to the learned Dean went away satisfied. The suggestion to live and die as Christ's faithful soldier which will enable one to face without too much dismay the evil in the world, cruelty, injustice, diseases etc., is really good. In other words believe in Christ and ignore these evils—fine way of facing a real problem! It may be easier to believe in a personal Creator, but the ease to believe one thing does not necessarily prove its reality.

ED. REASON.

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION IN INDIA.

Married to a Goat.

The Associated Press reported last month that remarkable wedding festivities were being celebrated in Ramkrishnapur, in the suburbs of Calcutta, where a nine-year old girl was married to a goat in the presence of Brahmins and relatives. It is the practice among certain classes of Hindus to have their children symbolically married to trees, swords, tables and other inanimate objects so that they may not become child widows and be debarred from marrying in the regular way when they arrive at a marriagable age. The father of the girl, in the above case, probably fearing that something untoward may happen to his daughter got her married to a goat!

Lifting of the Purdah.

Recently his Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, paid a visit to Lucknow. One of the notable features of his visit, according to the "Leader" was that the princesses of Hyderabad went about unveiled to the various functions held in honour of the Nizam. Further, gentlemen took the princesses in to dinner. Though many Sunni ulemas and Shia "mujtahids" were present at these functions, not one of them has raised a voice of disapproval.

Mantra Diksha for the Untouchables.

On the ninth of March, Pandit Malaviya, gave "Mantra Diksha" to about

500 men, women and children, of whom 150 belonged to the depressed class. This was done on the banks of the holy Ganges, at the Dasaswamedh Ghat, in the presence of a large number of orthodox Pandits, Sanskrit scholars, and saffron robed sanyasis. The Pandit handed to each of them a printed sheet of religious instructions to be practised by all of them.

Orthodox Brahmins Support Widow Remarriage.

Sm Nishamoni, a child widow and the daughter of an auditor at Cuttack was married last month to the son of Mr. Misra of the Narimangal Samiti, Orisa. The marriage ceremony was performed by an orthodox priest according to Shastric rites. Most of the orthodox Brahmin families attended the function.

A Pir and Sadhu at the same time.

At the end of last month the "durgah" of a Muslim saint in Bombay attracted a large number of Muslim worshippers. A crowd of Hindus also gathered on the scene with the similar object of worship as they held that the tomb was that of a sadhu. The Police had to come on the scene to prevent the development of any ugly incidents as a result of excessive piety.

SPREAD OF ATHEISM IN AMERICA.

The Fifth Annual Report of 4A of America, 4A being a Society for the Advance of Atheism, mentions that "the spread of atheism was never faster. It is not measured by the growth of Atheist groups, but by the decline of religious belief as a controlling factor in the lives of men. The drift of the age slowly gaining momentum, is away from religion.

This loss of faith causes consternation among the Orthodox who are powerless to arrest the movement. The Reconcilers, the Liberals and Modernists—are heroically saving the ship of Christianity by throwing her cargo overboard! With what zeal the Fosdicks, the Matthews and the whole crew of rescuers toss out first the garden of Eden and the Flood, followed by the Virgin Birth, Atonement, and the Resurrection. And then they gain a great victory by getting rid of hell and heaven and of the Devil and God, though with much ado they keep the name of the last. They may save the vessel of ecclesiasticism, but how long will men sail the seas in an empty ship? They will go ashore and enjoy life with the Atheists. We welcome the aid of the Modernists and pledge them our fullest co operation in ridding the world of Fundamentalism — of any serious acceptance of Christian theology.

The situation with respect to evolution, taken as whole, shows steady progress in our direction. Apparently the great Fundamentalist drive has petered out. One hears little of anti-evolution these days. The Fundamentalists have not added to their anti-evolution territory in years and to our knowledge evolution is taught in the few states where it is prohibited. The Bible as history is doomed.

As this goes to press we learn that a bill is to be introduced before the Tennessee Legislature to repeal the anti-evolution law as "not in harmony with the modern spirit of progress" and as unscientific.

There is a marked increase in the use of the word Atheist to designate the opponent of religion. The change is for the better. Atheist is the logical title for whoever has no God. Formerly for weighty reasons, the titles of Liberal, Rationalist and Freethinker were adopted because of their uncertainty of meaning. The very reason for those terms in earlier days now militates against them, except in the more backward and bigoted regions.

When asked where they live, one man may reply that he rides the subway; another, that he uses the ferry boat; and still another, that he walks. From which you may get some idea of where each lives, but you do not know definitely. Likewise the Rationalist and the Freethinker attempt to tell you where they stand by a term signifying their manner of reaching a conclusion. The Atheist is not afraid. He gives you his intellectual address. No explanation is needed. You know where to find him.

The Agnostic, is of course, godless, but says he doesn't know where he lives. That the title is little used is a good sign. It should never come into use. English hypocrisy begot it. Let honesty render it obsolete.

The supreme literary honour was conferred last year upon an avowed Atheist, when the Nobel Prize was given to Sinclair Lewis author of *Main Street* and *Elmor Gantry*. In

certain countries they can still prevent honest clear thinkers from reaching the higher places in politics, but in the field of mental achievement, the pretenders to dealings with the supernatural are not respected.

The decline of religion is reflected in the growing number of funerals conducted with secular or non-religious services and the increase in cremating instead of burying the dead.

When arrangements were made recently in Washington, D. C. for a secular funeral service for an Atheist, his sister, who is a Roman Catholic, insisted on a religious service. Even though it brought unpleasant publicity, his mother refused to yield. No priest was permitted to disregard the wishes of the dead. Too long have Atheists given way to avoid wounding the feelings of religious relatives. It is high time that the well should cease to be ruled by the sick.

Most encouraging is the lack of interest in religion among college men. Wherever compulsory chapel attendance is abolished, all, except a handful, stay away from the religious exercises. At Yale University, with its thousands of students, when there is no special attraction, only twelve or fifteen students attend chapel, now that compulsory attendance is abolished. Our members report that the conditions are just the same at other colleges and universities.

Leading Protestant Ministers, such as the Rev. Christian F. Reisner of New York, shamelessly advocate a return to compulsory chapel, citing the situation at Yale in support of their medical proposal. Force and force only, will get the boys and girls in the higher educational institutions waste their time listening to a hypocrite or a numbskull talking about or to God. How the priest likes to have the policeman or his equivalent help him keep a following!

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

No. 5]

May, 1932.

[Monthly ;

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. Articles are accepted for publication only on condition that they are not sent to any other journal. For further information write to the Hon'y Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

THE ATTITUDE OF BELIEVERS TOWARDS UNBELIEVERS IN BOMBAY.

The attitude of believers towards unbelievers, in these enlightened days, cannot be the same everywhere. What a believer in a creed thinks of an unbeliever in it cannot be the same in Paris, London or Berlin, in Mecca, Benares or Mangalore. This must necessarily vary according to the environment, the natural disposition and tendencies of the people with

regard to religion, their culture and intellectual level. While an unbeliever in the tenets of Catholicism would hardly surprise any one in Paris, in Mangalore he would be regarded as a lunatic at large. Non-conformity with the instincts of the herd is generally resented more in small communities herded within limited spaces than in large cities which are centres of intellectual activities.

In a city like Bombay, with its heterogeneous population, professing many religions, the question of unbelief interests only the community or society to which the unbeliever belongs, and the importance attached to it varies according to the different religions one comes across. For instance, while a Hindu may feel some concern about the belief of another Hindu in Hinduism, he would be perfectly indifferent about what a Christian, a Parsee or a Mahomedan thinks about his religion. Again, a Hindu may not attach the same importance to the question as a Catholic or Mahomedan in India would if the infidel belonged to either of their communities. This feeling of unconcern for the belief of an individual belonging to another creed might have been brought about by the foregone conclusion that a person who does not belong to one's creed is already doomed to eternal perdition. To a Mahomedan, all non-Mahomedans are "Kaffirs;" a Catholic, despite some casuistry on the subject, is certain that all non-Catholics must go to Hell. "*Hors de l'église point de salut*" taught our religious preceptors when we were young and I think the meaning is clear enough.

On the whole, it may safely be said that the attitude of a Hindu towards an unbeliever in his creed, though he belongs to his community, is one of indifference. He attaches more importance to the fulfilment of caste obligations than to actual belief in the religion. As a matter of fact, all grades of belief may be found in Hindu Society. While the poor uneducated labourer may be an idol worshipper, the learned Pundit may be a Pantheist or Agnostic and he does not cease to be a Hindu.

Free thought is making more progress among educated Hindus than in any other

society in India. A young man who has ceased to believe the dogmas of Hinduism may not feel any unpleasantness in his community except among his own female relatives who naturally would like him to conform to the ancestral practices. The same cannot be said of an educated Mahomedan. It would be unsafe for him to publicly profess his unbelief in Islamism in Bombay. Were he to do so at the Crawford Market he would, most probably, not reach the end of Pydownee unmolested. For this reason, one hardly hears of Mahomedan Rationalists in Bombay. It is true that the Mahomedans here, as elsewhere in India, are still very backward intellectually; still among the educated few, especially among the rising generation attending colleges, one sometimes comes across young fellows who doubt the soundness of their religion. Some have actually read Rationalistic publications, but they dare not show either at home or in public that they have imbibed rationalistic ideas.

The Parsee community, though small and reputed to be advanced intellectually, still shows a large number of bigots who are absolutely intolerant of innovations or heterodox ideas. The few bold spirits, who are courageous enough to break through this hide-bound religion, must have an unpleasant time in the community. Despite this, one is pleased to note that there is a growing number of well educated and enthusiastic young men and women who are Rationalists. One must admire their moral courage and understand all the difficulties they experience with their people. It would appear that pandering to the superstitious and out-worn practices of the community is a paying business as some Parsee newspapers here thrive on this despicable policy. It is also sad to think that there

are some influential Parsees who, at heart, are Rationalists but are afraid to express their views publicly through fear of losing influence.

As regard the Christians in Bombay, both Catholics and Protestants, these communities show a very high percentage of uncultured and half educated people. The Catholics are very conservative and narrow-minded in religious matters, and the Protestants may be less so. Except for the remarks of old cronies, Bible-thumpers, and the wives of Railway guards and drivers, a Free-thinker in the Protestant society of Bombay may pass almost unnoticed. Nobody would bother to pray for the salvation of his soul. He may even get on well with the parson of his parish if he is tactful enough. One can hardly expect Free-thinkers among these people whose intellectual culture is still very poor. Most of the Protestant schools are in the hands of Missionaries. The Roman Catholic population of Bombay being divided into several communities, strongly antagonistic to one another, the tendency is to take interest only in the affairs of one's own community. Most of the Catholics to be found in Bombay are the descendants of settlers from the villages of Salsette in the Bombay Presidency, Goa, Mangalore and Cochin. A sprinkling hail from Madras. All these people have been educated by priests and are perfectly medieval in their mental outlook. A Free-thinker in their rank is a very rare occurrence. They have not the slightest idea how intelligent people have come by their unbelief. They have not the slightest suspicion how modern science and thought have completely discredited their religion and reduced it to the level of the most primitive superstitions. Their priests have taught them that most scientists are per-

verse people, enemies of the Church, and that is enough for them to look upon any departure from the orthodox belief as gross heresy and so erroneous. They believe that people come to their unbelief only by moral lapse and not through diligent searching after the truth of the religion. Being ignorant of the other side of the question, they fondly believe that all who do not believe like themselves are in the wrong, and their strong hope is that unbelievers will repent and be converted before the end comes. Knowing their own limitations, and also through fear of being "perverted," they never or seldom question unbelievers. They make absolutely no attempt to find out what has caused the loss of their faith. Some of them, quite good naturedly, will tell an unbeliever, that they pray for his salvation and express the hope that he will come back to the Church. In their own circle, however, the unbeliever comes in for a good deal of ignorant criticism, misrepresentations and calumny. The poor devils really believe what their priests gravely tell them, namely—all Free-thinkers are wicked people and should be avoided. All of them believe that Freethinkers are fools. All this shows that these prejudiced people have a very good opinion of themselves and have no doubt about the soundness of their faith. Yet, it is an undoubted fact that many of them own shocking ethical ideas and are appalling in their selfishness. A close acquaintance with them gives one the impression that their religious upbringing might have accomplished any thing but the formation of sound character. These are the persons who are conceited and stupid enough to tell Rationalists that they pray for them! *A striking illustration of the adage, "Where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise."*

C. L. D'AVORNE.

A PARLIAMENT WITHOUT GOD.

On an April day in 1919, not long after the close of the World War, about 30 nations were represented—Black, Brown, Yellow, White—in the Clock Hall of the Foreign Office at Paris. Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, proposed the formation of a League of Nations. A Rationalist, Georges Clemenceau, presided. The nations agreed. Not a prayer was said. Not a hymn was sung. No sign of the Cross was made. Nobody pointed to God. And the League, or Society of Nations, opened its beneficent work for the peace and co-operation of humanity on 10th January, 1920.

In June, 1920, at St. James's Palace, London, a meeting of the League Council was held. It was free to the public, and I was happy to sit with ordinary citizens as we listened to the discussion of world affairs carried on by delegates from Japan, Italy, France, Britain, Spain, Brazil, Greece and Belgium. I think the outstanding figure at that session was Dr. Nansen, who came forward—bright eyed, white-haired, genial—and related to the Council the measures he had taken to relieve hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war and refugees. Nansen was a Rationalist. He would not have felt at home if the Council had knelt in prayer. But it did not kneel. It opened no Bible, no Koran, no Veda, no Upanishad, no Purana. It was simply human.

In September, 1920, the first General Assembly of the League took place at Geneva. Forty-two nations (India among them) made their voices heard in the cause of arbitration, conciliation, mutual aid. Again and again the Assembly has met, the most recent occasion being in March, 1932. Not once has the president appealed to Heaven. In September, 1932,

the number of nation-members will rise to 56; the 56th admission being the nation of Iraq. The people of Iraq are mainly Muslim, but they will not enter with cries of "Allah-o-Akbar"! They will not place a copy of their Islamic Scripture on the table at Geneva. They will come in, amid cordial applause, simply as a community among other human communities. Even if the Vatican City joined, its representative would not dare to tell the nations that all their work of mercy and justice must be performed in the name of the God of the Catholic Church. So this great international Parliament is without God. Its proceedings are regulated by a Pact, or Covenant, of 26 Articles. Not a word about God occurs in this Covenant. The League, in 1928, welcomed the Kellogg Pact (Pact of Paris) for the outlawry of war. The Pact of Paris is non-theological.

The League has associated with it the International Labour office, which deals with conditions of labour in field, factory, workshop, mine and ship. I have more than once visited the Office at Geneva. I saw no priest at an altar. I heard no supplications for God's blessing. The Director is Albert Thomas, a French Rationalist.

At the city of the Hague, in Holland, the League's Permanent Court of International Justice considers cases of dispute and misunderstanding. Its 15 Judges do not invoke the assistance of God. They use human reason, human experience, human precedents, human vision, human ethics, human philosophy, human common-sense. This Court takes a wider survey of affairs than any legal Authority that ever before acted. It acts without God.

FREDERICK J. GOULD.

OUR FRIENDS, THE JESUITS.

The term Jesuits is the popular name, as every one knows, for the "Society" or "Company" of Jesus, a religious order of the Roman Catholic Church, founded in 1539 by Ignatius Loyola.

This man, remarkable in many ways, was the 13th son of a Spanish nobleman and was born at the Castle of Loyola in the Basque Province of Guipuzoca. For a short time he served as a page at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella. He later embraced a soldier's career. An accident made him lame for life. It was during the wearisome convalescence that his nature underwent one of those curious metamorphoses which frequently affect religious maniacs such as for example, Francis of Assisi and Tolstoy. We know very little about his career in the army beyond the fact that he had considerable courage; was a reckless gambler—so much so that he completely squandered the large fortune which his father left him. He also had a weakness for women. Indeed all authorities seem to agree that Ignatius was an appallingly immoral person. But, as it often happens, grievous sickness results in piety. And so it was with Ignatius. When sickness left him, the ardour of his nature, which enabled him to amuse himself so much with women while in the army, became suddenly animated by the highest religious aspirations, and after a period of mental unrest and complete mental instability during which he practised fasting, scourging and other austerities, and became a hopeless victim of all sorts of morbid sentiments, he decided that the only thing left for him to do, in order to save his soul, was to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (1523). Eventually he got himself ordained priest at

Venice and took the usual vows of chastity and poverty. His face is a key to his character. In 1540 Pope Paul, who was also a reprobate in the days of his youth, sanctioned the formation of the famous Society or Company, and in the following year Ignatius became its first "general" like Wm. Booth who was made "general" of the Salvation Army in the last century in Britain.

The first object of Ignatius was holy work in the Holy Land, but he found the journey thither made impossible by the Turkish war, and that was the reason why he offered his services to Paul. At this time the prestige and authority of the Papacy was gravely imperilled by the rapid succession of Protestant or Reformed Churches, and in this way Ignatius came to be intimately associated with what is called by the Church of Rome the "Counter Reformation." Ignatius at once saw that there was only one satisfactory method of "reforming" a person and that was, as we shall see in a moment, by the simple process of extermination. In course of time the "order" spread all over Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, the Netherlands, England and Russia, but in England its foothold was always insecure, owing to the appalling penal laws against them and all Catholic priests. In his work of building up the "Society" and disseminating the new "ideas" and interesting "Methods of reforming mankind" by its extermination,—if all other persuasive methods failed,—Ignatius was generously assisted by a band of eager disciples, including James Lainez, Francis Xavier, Nicholas Bobabilla, and Francis Borgia among his own countrymen, and Simon Rodriguez, a Portuguese, and Peter le

Fevre a native of Savoy. So successful was their work that on the celebration of the first centenary, the order counted 13,112 members dispersed over 32 provinces. Moreover Jesuit Missionaries were sent to all corners of the Earth and wherever they went they carried with them the "message" of their Church and a smattering of learning and some sort of culture. Thus their missions flourished in China and Japan and in places so far apart as Brazil and the Portuguese settlement in India on the one hand, and the Philippine Islands and California on the other, and, of course, numerous "Martyrs" gave up their lives. Portugal first suppressed the Jesuits by the Royal Decree in 1759, and France and Spain soon followed her example. Finally the activities of this company of Jesus became so violently subversive to every Secular Government in Europe that Pope Clement XIV, under pressure by the Bourbons, and actuated by a longing to restore some sort of peace in the Church, issued his brief "Dominus ac Redemptor Noster," by which the Society was suppressed throughout the world (1773), but it was not enforced in Russia, where the Society carried on. The suppression was however only temporary. In 1814 Pope Pius VII restored the Jesuits everywhere. The Society has never regained its former position of authoritative public importance. To day, only in Switzerland are the Jesuits formally and by name forbidden to have establishments. Spain and Russia are about to follow Switzerland. From England they were very early excluded by penal laws, which imposed death as the penalty for disobedience. Since these were relaxed, and all religious communities were tolerated, they have established several houses and conduct three boarding Colleges and six secondary Schools in

England and Scotland. In 1931 the Society was the biggest of the religious orders in the world, with the exception of the totality of the three branches of the Franciscans, having some 21,000 members.

Let us now glance briefly at some of the achievements of the Jesuits. The absurd doctrine that the Pope is "Christ's vicar on earth", and therefore that the first duty of every true Catholic is complete obedience to his word in spiritual matters, was improperly stretched by the Jesuits and others into the temporal domain.

Further, Ignatius taught and therefore all Jesuits believed that a Sovereign might be deposed and even killed (as was done by Cromwell in England) were he a tyrant, a usurper or did he disregard the authority of the Supreme Pontiff "who is superior at all times to him as the Soul is to the body". The lawfulness of tyrannicide was formally taught by only one Jesuit of eminence, Mariana, and to teach so was forbidden to members of the Society under severe penalties from about 1600. But from it arose the proved complicity in a long series of conspiracies and murderous plots, including the murder of the Regent Morton in Scotland, of Henry III in 1584, of Henry IV in 1584, and of the Prince of Orange in 1580 in France. Similarly Jesuits had a hand in the Gunpowder Plot, in the formation of the Ligue de Guise, in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the appalling persecutions and massacres which followed that event and also in that most terrible of wars the Thirty Years war. Their influence can easily be traced in the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Governments in Europe have always had good cause to look on the Jesuits as a terrible menace to the constitution and

State, by reason of their teachings, which were directly subversive of Secular Governments.

Obedience was always a cardinal virtue of the Jesuits; throughout every grade of the Society the word of a superior is absolute law in all matters, good or bad, criminal or otherwise. "I desire" says Ignatius, "that you strive to exercise yourselves to recognise Christ our Lord in every Superior". The resulting solidarity of the body made it a further object of fear and hatred and suspicion to kings and to lesser peoples, while their remarkable skill in the science of casuistry was made the chief ground in Pascal's clever and witty indictment of the order, in his *Lettres Provinciales*. Every crime in furtherance of the cause of the Society was justified morally in the eye of the Jesuit, and was looked upon as a means to an end, namely the ultimate success of the Society. The object of the Society, it may be briefly said, was to establish permanently on Earth the Supremacy and domination of the Church, not only as regards matters spiritual, but also temporal and of the Pope, the "Vicar of Christ on Earth"; in other words, to make the Church an "*imperium in imperio*."

The Cup of Europe's calamities was filled to the brim during the appalling Inquisitions created at the instigation of this, the most infamous of all religious orders, in the 18th century. The institution known as the "Inquisition" was originally an ecclesiastical tribunal first outlined at the Synod of Toulouse in 1229, and established by the "Vicar of Christ," Pope Gregory IX, after the barbarous conquest of the Albigenses in 1233.

In the 17th century a committee consisting of Catholic laymen, all petty

tradesmen, and the parish priest, was ordered to be set up in every parish in Europe to search for and bring heretics before the Bishops. Persons accused of heresy were examined privately and if sufficient concocted evidence was found against them they became liable to ecclesiastical penalties. If they remained impenitent the severest ecclesiastical penalty, viz. excommunication was pronounced and they were handed over to the civil authority for capital punishment. The purely ecclesiastical punishment was trivial, ranging from the enjoining of certain good works such as alms-giving to imprisonment for life. Informers' names were kept strictly secret, and torture surpassing the ingenuities of even the Chinese was resorted to, to extract confession, while the death penalty usually took the form of burning. The Inquisition was set up in Italy, Spain and all its dependencies, Portugal and France, but not in England, where heretics were tried by the ordinary tribunals. It flourished chiefly in Spain, owing to the number of Jews and Mahomedans and their descendants settled there, who, while outwardly conforming to Christianity to avoid persecution, practised their own religion in secret. The Mahomedans were the chief sufferers in Spain. The total number of those who perished in Europe is not exactly known, but the extent of the calamity may be measured from the record of Llorente, the historian, who was also the Secretary of the Inquisition in Madrid from 1790-92. According to Llorente 11,500 persons were burnt in Spain alone during the 18 years of Torquemada's interesting tenure of office as Grand Inquisitor. The Spanish Inquisition was suppressed by Napoleon in 1814, revived by Ferdinand VII in 1814

and was finally abolished by the Cortes in 1835. It still exists in the Vatican under the name of the "Holy Office", but its activities are now confined to censorship and the burning of books, especially those published by Rationalists and other such "dangerous bodies". Owing to the cruelties perpetrated under its auspices the Inquisition has come to be regarded in all lands, by educated mankind, as a synonym for religious bigotry coupled with the practice of appallingly gross inhumanity. Here, in India, the Inquisition was established in Goa, and Francis Xavier desired much to burn the Jews he found established in Western India.

To sum up, it may be said without exaggeration, after a careful and dispassionate study of the history of the Jesuits, that whatsoever things are false, whatsoever things are impure, whatsoever things are hateful, whatsoever things are of evil report, if there be any vice, and if there be any infamy, all these things are blended in the "company" of Ignatius Loyola. Perhaps the most appalling of all the crimes in which their hand can be traced was the slaughter of St. Bartholomew's Day (August 24, 1572). The massacre commenced in Paris and spread through the Provinces during the succeeding weeks. The total number of those killed has been estimated at figures ranging from 50,000 to 70,000. Catherine de Medici, it will be recalled, summoned a council and St. Bartholomew's Day was appointed for the massacre. Admiral Coligny, a Protestant leader, was enticed to Paris and murdered. His death was the signal for an orgy of slaughter. The Prince of Conde and a few others only saved their lives by pretended conversion to the

Catholic Religion. The Pope celebrated the event by striking a medal, proclaiming a year of Jubilee and other ceremonies.

It would be well if this and others were the only religious crimes and Christian persecutions. Alas, they all go to prove the truth of the saying of the Founder of the Christian Religion:—

"I came not to send peace on earth but a sword." No wars so lasting, so relentless, so bloody, as the religious wars of the Catholic Church. It has been no thin red line.

J. D. JENKINS.

(Our contributor has necessarily dealt very briefly with the history of that Society. He has however mentioned that it became an object of suspicion and hatred everywhere in Europe culminating in its expulsion from many countries and its temporary suppression by the Pope. The Jesuits always explain, with tears in their eyes, that all the "persecutions" they have suffered were caused by the machinations and jealousies of Freemasons, Freethinkers and other unbelievers who have a mortal dread of them !

In unenlightened countries, the Jesuits still pass for paragons of learning which in these days of encyclopedic knowledge they certainly are not. But their past reputation for learning still serves them in good stead. Where the Jesuits have no political influence to play their sinister games they settle down as educationists and saintly priests. There are few intriguers like the Jesuits in the world. The sorry part of it is that they always manage to make use of rich and influential Catholic women to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them.

ED. REASON.)

THE GOD-FEARING MAN.

It is worthwhile to study in outline the mental equipment of the type of the God-fearing man. A belief is commonly held that the aim of civilisation ought to be the production of this type of being in abundance, and that the test of merit should be based upon its capacity to make belief in God universal, and fear the ethical basis for ordered living. No doubt, a finer emotion in love is often imputed to be adjectival to the moral principle, but, the main, basic start for the ethical code is given by the more primitive feeling of fear and helplessness underlying the theory of supposed reward and punishment in one form or other, in this life or in a presumptive next.

It is unnecessary to discuss which out of the two emotions is the more primitive, elementary, or dominant one. For the Rationalist, they do not make much difference. Emotion in whatever form is *protanto* the exclusion of the play of intellect. Love is blind is not an untruth in any sense. Fear warps intelligence. Whether love is the hypocritical cloak for fear or not, to the extent to which it dominates the human brain, its effect is no more beneficial to the attainment of truth than its darker sister, fear. The common description of the believer in God as a God-fearing man is not therefore less apposite than the rarer expression of the lover of God or God-loving man; in fact one hardly ever comes across the latter phrase. A reason suggests itself forthwith. Fear is a robust, if savage, instinct in which the object predominates the subject. The one that has the psychological experience of fear is rendered less potent than the object that instils it. Fear is masculine in that sense. It is masculine to the

point of brutality. The finer, the more refined aesthetic, feminine touch is totally absent therefrom. Love, on the other hand, in its appeal to the finer nature has the tenderness of the feminine element. The object of love rules in a sense quite different than from the object of fear. The man that loves an object does not usually place himself below it. So far as any reflection is permissible in the content of love, the subject and object stand more or less on an equal footing, and in some instances, the object is conceived as being clearly stationed below oneself, the love for children or the spouse for instance. Anyway, the fact is there, *viz.*, that there are more god-fearing men than god-loving men, and that the latter description is an oddity so sacred that it may, for the present, be excluded from consideration.

Before dismissing divine love, however, it will be well to remember that this emotion toward a cherished object is, in the main, responsible for our blindness to its imperfections, its failures and its shortcomings. Men do not perceive the vast processes of experimentation going on in nature, sacrificing hosts of individuals, although the race as a race is somewhat maintained and perfected progressively. In fact, the very idea of progress in the race presupposes an unfulfilled ideal, an imperfect past seeking to perfect itself hereafter, with the aid of an earnest palpitating NOW. Nature red in tooth and claw, the agony and suffering, moral, mental and physical imperfections; these, the lover of God fails to attend to. His attitude is one of turning away from their reality. To them, either they do not exist at all, or exist only in the shade of Maya. Imperfection is an enigma somehow to be got over by jugglery of words

or thought. God is not and can never be imperfect. Either there is something else that is imperfect which God designed to make hereafter perfect, or the imperfection is a great illusion, whatsoever it might be. Verily, love is blind in heaven, not merely on earth.

To deduce the standard of moral perfection from a blinded or partial vision cannot therefore satisfy the human talent, that has so far evolved. God that created the cobra, the tiger, the bullet, poison gas, lightning, the disease germ, cyclone, earthquake, and may be, the destruction of planets and stars is not Love. The slender gleams of love lie buried deep in the mass of indifference, even positive malignity. And he who sees only love and does not see non-love, is one whose vision is to that extent dull. A sudden deliverance from trouble, a release from anxiety may sometime induce faith in the doctrine that the ultimate forces of nature tend to love and affability, but the dead dull flow of its current is ever washing it away.

The true solution is to be found in the path of fear. Nature is dreadful, God is to be feared. If man would be dutiful, it behoved him not to incur His displeasure. Good boys get prizes in heaven, while bad ones are caned in hell. It is an eternal hell, be it marked, an everlasting torment. Get there once and one is stuck up there for all time. Neither is there an end to that suffering or to that life. Immortality becomes as much a burden to the vicious soul as it tends to deaden the life virtuous by one endless tedious task of enjoying bliss in heaven. The fear of God keeps the man in proper tone; it is a perpetual dread which, if it keeps him from doing wrong, yet emasculates his personality and makes him a slave

to chicken-hearted submission. His discretion is warped, independent judgment replaced by the dictation of those forces that rule the race for their selfish and mean ends. Reason, in them, dares not lift its head lest it should strike against the cross-bar of authority fixed for its safe growth. The God-fearing man is thus, the safe man. But prithe, safe for whom? Safe, not for himself, not for his inquiring brother, nor safe for the seeker of truth, but safe for those that would make a tool of him, for those that would assume authority to rule mankind, morally and spiritually, for the imposters that usurp the function of the one ruling faculty of the human mind, "Reason." He who can stifle doubt with comfort, he who is not perturbed by the complexities and inconsistencies of human existence is the most dangerous person in human society. Nothing will disturb him from sleep. Intellectual life has attained in him a quietus and self-complacency that all the discoveries of modern science cannot quicken. To him the unfolding of the universe, the discovery of a new star, or planet, or its laws of motion or the fascination of the electron-relation has no meaning, no advancement upon his already sealed book of limited knowledge or ignorance. He, by far, outnumbers the diligent student, and truth is often discovered by counting and the show of hands. His victory is thus assured in all fields as in the race, he starts with the approbation of the crowd martialled on his side by the dexterity of his philosophy of "safety."

It is generally claimed for the god-fearing man that he is blessed bothways. He fears God and obeys His dictates, and so has his ticket in heaven for a reserved berth. He is also man-fearing in consequence and as such, he has the confidence

of his comrades on earth. He is afraid of transgressing the conventions of their life, and so is a dutiful member of human society. He strikes no new paths, and treads on no thorns. He is himself in safety, and is competent to lead others on the track. But the way of truth does not lie on the road to safety. Expediency is not the test to determine the value of reality. That way may lie innumerable pit-falls, and ensnaring signs. The human intellect, guided by the experience of the race, is the only agent entitled to take the lead. Fear, as was premised before, is a primitive emotion, beginning in savagery when nature was least understood. Its witchcraft, magic and religion are fast giving way for the presentation of proper perspective. Thunder is no longer God Thor, nor lightening, Indra's stroke. Science has invented the conductor to rob Thor's hammer of its terror. Electricity is man's servant now. Man now knows more about fertility and fecundity than when prayers for rain and harvest were made by our ancestor Science, the product of human reflection and intelligence, is unravelling more mysteries in the field of religious, spiritual and

moral experience than was possible before its analytical, classificatory and synthetic methods invaded them. Anthropology, sociology and comparative religion give the better clue to the origins and beginnings, the conceptions of godhead and immortality. A dispassionate study reveals the close affinity and relationship that subsisted among the gods of the world. Yesterday was the logical sequence of the day before, and faith at one stage lead up to the particular form of religion closely following. If ever revelation there was, it was never in the way of upsetting the immediate past.

If man is afraid of speaking the truth, let him for ever remain in bondage to the fetish of the childhood of the race. Let him fear God, and fear the godly men. To the seeker after truth, these offer no obstacle. They claim no allegiance, as they offer no protection. Let the Rationalist pull along, neither fearing God nor man. Life, intellectually, runs the other way toward Truth, despite promise of reward, nor fear of punishment.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

Beautiful thoughts are but emanations from beautiful souls shedding around them their own substance, as perfumes are particles of flowers that melt upon the air.

ANATOLE FRANCE.

He alone is sure of never speaking an untruth to his fellows who in the silence of scientific meditation has felt the impossibility of being untrue to himself.

LEON BRUNSCHVIG.

THE DANGER OF THE VEDANTA.

The Vedanta is an interesting and inspiring chapter in the History of Thought, but it is by no means "a thoroughly reasoned view of the problems that have to do with man's world and his place in it." This is no disparagement of the mental powers of our philosophical forebears. It was certainly for the opportunities then available an "unusually strenuous effort to think consistently" which is after all philosophy. The method of philosophy is the method of all scientific thought and the Vedanta as a living philosophy must stand or fall before this test. The damage that it has done to India is that a respect for it has led to the erroneous idea that the Vedanta has actually solved the philosophical problems arising out of the phenomenon of life. To the extent to which it does not search for truth but for God and to the extent to which it is composed of ingenious doctrines to explain away the inexplicable, to the extent to which it attempts to build the so called revealed truths of the Upanishads into a logical philosophical system it is worthless for India.

To make clear what may seem to many a blasphemy, we shall quote from a scholar whose sympathy and enthusiasm in the cause of Indian Philosophy is well known and above reproach.

Dr. Paul Denssen addressing the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1893 said, speaking of the doctrine of Maya "The accord here of Platonism and Vedantism is wonderful, but both have grasped this great metaphysical truth by intuition; their tenet is true, but they are not able to prove it, and in so far they are defective." To say of a philosophy that it has reached a truth by intuitions is only a round about way of saying

that it has never been a philosophy at all.

This need not dishearten us. Some of the most revered and satisfying systems of thought are intuitive. It is in this sphere alone that the Vedanta must play its part. In the organised systems of thought that are called Scientific Philosophy and which are being slowly and painfully built up century by century the Vedanta has had a definite part to play at a particular time. It has long since finished with playing that part. Let us not allow racial vanity and abject mental slavery to force us to behave like puppets and shout indiscriminate eulogies of the Vedanta as the most supreme body of philosophical thought extant.

Max Muller says of the Vedanta that it appears to him a system in which human speculation has reached its very acme. One should read the word "speculation" correctly in the sense of intellectual cobweb spinning and think of the Vedanta-religion and not of the Vedanta-philosophy. The fundamental doctrine of the Vedanta is: Brahman is true, the World is false, the Soul is Brahman and nothing else.

If it be asked how it is known that Brahman alone is the cause of all and is all "the Commentator insists very strongly that such knowledge is not to be gained by sense, perception or inference but simply by the Veda". In some places he also admits as a second source of knowledge, Sakshatkara or manifestation.

The reverence for the Upanishads that India feels has led to several widespread beliefs regarding the place of India in World Hegemony. These myths because of their high-brow masquerading are more enervating than vacuity of

ignorance can ever be. Some of them are :—

The Hindus are a Mystic Race.

In the Upanishads are secrets that if resurrected would allow India to stand aside and watch (sardonically) the West ride to its Doom.

The happiness that comes from mystic practices is greater than any that the world of man is aware of.

If we lived according to the Upanishads the world would sit at India's feet to learn the philosophy of Life.

The Things of the Soul are the Only Reality.

India will be the cradle of the next civilization.

When India achieves perfection Life will be like what it was in the Time of Ramchandra of Ayodhya.

These myths take many forms. Here are some cloaked in science and romance at one and the same time. The quotations are chosen at random and are merely samples from an ocean of material. In his 'India and the West' F. S. Marvin says "The question of Indian nationality is often linked with that of Hinduism as a religion." He goes on to quote from "The Hindu View of Life" by Prof. R. Krishnan that "The corner stone of the new Indian nation, as it was of the old Hindu race, must be this supreme consciousness of Selfthis peculiar Hindu Spirit-consciousness, involving the unity of all life in the identity of God and Man."

Repeating this theme Marvin goes on to say that the strength of the Indian position lies "In the first place in its true and noble exaltation of the speculative faculties above the practical, of thought above action." And "one must pray that no invasion of Western vigour and scientific organization will drive out the lively spirit of inquiry, the interest in abstract

questions, the contempt for material conditions of time and space which distinguish so large a section of intellectual India, the student at the universities and the pilgrims on the march alike." Here we have the whole life-destroying myth decked out in attractive colours but requiring only the minimum of thought to prise up the thin veneer of plausibility and fatal romanticism that covers it.

"Exaltation of the speculative faculties above the practical, of thought above action."

That explains a lot. Now we know why our university hostels have no necessity to feed the students and the reason why we often find on the road to Benares pilgrims rooted to the soil and mummified by the Sun and the Rain but alive and chirrupy. Also how true about our interest in abstract questions. Some results of that boundless interest are given below. It is not necessary to worry about the context :

"By controlling the gross form of the elements, one attains subtlety, levity, sublimity, gravity and power of touching distant objects such as the moon etc. etc."

Various mysterious powers that can be obtained by practising samyama on the heavenly objects:—"If a devotee practises Samyama on the solar disc, he obtains the knowledge of the entire universe etc. etc."

"When a Yogi by his attainments can create different bodies for himself the question is whether he creates many minds."

[The above quotations are from translations of The Sacred Books of the Hindus edited by Major B. D. Basu, I. M. S. (Retired).]

M. B. DALAL

WHAT RELIGION LEADS TO !

Religion and Hygiene.

Ramkrishna Paramhansa, a modern saint with a large following, was an educated man who gave up civilized life and took to religion. One of his followers gives the following description of him in a Marathi monthly :—

During the time he took his training for the religious life, he used to clean latrines and other dirty places, eat food prepared by the lowest caste, or even food left half-eaten by a dog. He saw no difference between the dirtiest smells and the perfume of sandalwood. Hence not only other people thought him mad, but he himself often feared that he was going stark mad. But prayer made him all right." This is religion. Of course it is well-known that it is part of the religious duty of a Brahmin to swallow the excrement of a cow.

Religion and Mathematics.

A Marathi Christian Journal cites C. Urquhart as the authority for the following :—"The Jewish race began some 3700 years ago, and in 1922, there were 15,200,000 Jews. Hence the number must have doubled once in every 162 years. Now the total population of the world in 1922 being 1,804,000,000, the original human couple which started mankind must have doubled 30.75 times to give this number. If we take the Jewish rate of doubling, this first couple must have lived 5000 years back, which agrees with the Bible. But if we take two

million years as the life of the human race as scientists pretend, the population of the world should have been 2500 million times what it was in 1922. So the theory of evolution must be false since it disagrees with mathematics and the story of the Bible must be true." The poor booby had never known the Theory of Population.

Religious Camouflage.

Religious people are always obsessed with sex, some of them considering it dirty, and the others sacred, both being merely two phases of the same obsession. The sacred phase is seen in phallic worship and similar beliefs, and the other by all kinds of taboos in sex matters, such as considering sex relations a sin unless sanctioned by a priest muttering mystic *mantras*. The Hindu God, (or rather incarnation of God) Krishna, is one of the most popular god and great sexual power is attributed to him. He is not only credited with 16108 wives, but innumerable amorous adventures with Gopies (wives of the Gopas, who were dairy-farmers). There is nothing surprising in this, since man makes god in his own image. This is quite satisfactory to the people who consider sex sacred, but hardly likely to please the ones who think it dirty, and who consequently make the sexless celluloid doll their ideal. But when a god is accepted by the people, you cannot get rid of him or his popular qualities very easily. The only

way out was to pretend that the amours were only allegorical and meant something entirely different from what they seemed to mean, something mystic which you cannot understand unless you are initiated! It is patent to everybody with any common sense that this is mere pretence. The descriptions of the amours of Krishna are given in a frankly sensual way and by writers who considered themselves devotees of the god. What right has anybody to pretend that they mean something else, and what earthly sense is there in giving a sexual form to some profound truths which nobody can understand? These stories are found in Sanscrit and all Indian languages derived from it. They are frankly love stories and no amount of camouflage can make them anything else. The form in which the god Shiva is worshipped is a combination of the reproductive organs of both sexes. Are these also spiritual? This pretended spirituality is only a bad attempt at camouflage, but it is very useful for people who go in for sex stories.

When is obscenity not obscene?

Frankly obscene descriptions are allowed in these stories, and the

obscenity law is powerless against them, since the law expressly makes an exception in religious matters. In a Calcutta case, the accused was acquitted because, though he had published obscene literature, it referred to the amours of Krishna and the Gopis, which are to be understood in a spiritual way. Those who have seen obscene pictures on the walls of temples will find it difficult to imagine anything spiritual about them. To take another instance, only last month we had the Holi festival, during which obscene words are uttered aloud in the street! This is seen especially in the smaller towns and villages, where even respectable women may be greeted with obscene remarks if they venture out during these days. Wood is obtained for bonfires by stealing anything made of wood, and many must have lost signboards and similar things mysteriously during the night. The bonfire is a religious duty and stealing and obscenity too. The law can prevent serious people from expressing their honest opinions on sex matters, but has to confess its impotence against a blind force like religion.

R. D. KARVE.

ADVERTISING GOD.

Always in the front rank when something inherently stupid is required, the *Morning Post* for February 25 gives a couple of columns on one of the best pages of that issue to a rubbishy sort of a book published by the Christian Evidence Society. The book professes to give the views on religion of over two hundred Fellows of the Royal Society. I haven't read the book and don't intend to waste time—or 12s. 6d.—by doing so. I am, I hope, always ready to listen with respectful attention to either eminent scientists or our local dustmen when they are talking about the things in which they specialize, and about which they may rightly claim to know more than I do. But when they are speaking where their knowledge is equal, and that knowledge is equal to zero, their authority disappears altogether. Then we are not dealing with a statement of scientific fact or scientific theory, but a mere statement of a mental attitude, and their confessions are of value only to the student of the ebb and flow of mass opinion or the prevalence of psycho-pathological states. A genuinely scientific enquiry, or even a genuinely intelligent enquiry, intended to be of use to the student of social psychology would take the replies in cases such as those tabulated, and read them in the light of a knowledge of the early training and educational and social environment of those questioned. But that, of course, is not the aim of the enquiry; and if it were it would not be of the least interest to the really unintelligent public for which the *Morning Post* mainly caters. The object of the book is to provide a kind of soothing syrup for those who might develop an uneasiness with regard to religious beliefs. If they are troubled

with doubts about the truth or the utility of religion they are asked to consider the number of eminent men who still believe in a God or a future life, and then to doze again. It is never likely to dawn upon this class that the truth of an opinion can never be settled by a vote, or that there has never yet been an opinion that had not at one time a very enormous and educated majority against it. Even such Christians as are subject to spasms of intelligent thinking might reflect that at one time Christianity was in an apparently hopeless minority, and also that if a vote had been taken in the sixteenth century it would have swept Protestantism off the face of the earth. In the financial world titles and the names of those enjoying social distinctions are valuable assets on the directorates of bubble companies. In religion the names of eminent men are equally valuable as the equivalents of financial "guinea pigs." In all directions great names are used by knaves to impose upon fools.

* * *

Trying it Both Ways.

When it has been said by Freethinkers that science was opposed to religion, and gave no evidence whatever for the existence of a God or a soul, the reply was to ask whether one expected to find the soul in a test tube, or God in a chemical formula? That reply was considered impressive by most of the champions of theology. To-day men like Jeans and Eddington, with many lesser lights, try to make it clear—by making the water just a little muddier than it was—that science cannot express an opinion on God because the realm of religion is one to which scientific tests do not apply. But

if you cannot find God in a test tube, and if the sphere of religion lies outside science, what is the use of quoting scientists, as scientists, on behalf of the reality of God and the soul? Of course, no sensible person ever thought you could find an idea imbedded in a test tube, and it is not a bad sample of the religious type of mind that such an assumption should have been attributed to the unbeliever. On the other hand, it is emphatically not true that the sphere of religion lies outside science or that it is beyond the reach of scientific method. Whether we regard religion as being purely psychological or socio-psychological it still falls within the scope of science. In any case you cannot reasonably throw out the search of a test tube for God as irrelevant, and then take the testimony of a worker with test tubes as decisive, or rule religion as being outside science and then cite science as evidence for the existence of a soul. There should be a trace of consistency even with religious stupidity.

But one striking thing about these figures, selected for the most part, I have not the slightest doubt, from a fairly "safe" list of possibles, is the strikingly large show of declarations against religion, and in this country where public men are generally afraid to express their disbelief this is noteworthy. Thus a question is asked, "Do you credit the existence of a spiritual domain." Of course, "spiritual domain" may mean anything from the world of imponderable forces with which science juggles, to the ghostland of the spook-hunting spiritualist, but to even this question, out of the 200 answers, no less than 58 are either doubtful or negative. Whether science *rejects* (not whether it supports) the belief in a personal God 103 answer it

does not, while 97 answer no or are doubtful. Whether the belief in evolution is compatible with belief in a Creator 121 say it is, while 79 are doubtful or say, no. And what is meant in each case by "Creator" is not stated. The authors of the book are too artful to enquire. Finally, to the question whether late developments of science are favourable to religion 126 say either it is not or they are very doubtful about it. Even on a vote it looks as though religion is rapidly losing ground.

* * *

A Suggestion.

The Churches have a great many methods of conducting the advertising side of their business. First, they write their own testimonials and quote them as quite conclusive evidence. It is hardly ever noted that the testimonies to the super-excellence of Christianity are nearly always written by Christians, mostly by persons, and they are as convincing, to anyone with moderate intelligence, as the praises, that a commercial traveller sings of his goods. Then the Churches supply reports of their excellent work to newspaper men, and afterwards reprint them as unbiased and unmasked for testimonies to their work. This plan was worked very assiduously by the Salvation Army, one of their active publicity agents being the late Harold Begbie. Nearly all the newspaper reports of the Churches and Chapels that appear in the papers as though they were independent accounts owe their origin to these pious publicity committees. They are as unsolicited as are the photographs of cabinet ministers stroking their favourite cat in the back garden. But this testimony of scientists to religion might be better worked. I suggest they should be prepared in this way:—

Professor — writes: "I cannot say how much my work on the nature of cancer has been helped by my belief in the purposeful nature of living matter. It seems to me that a disease such as cancer, so difficult to diagnose, and once established so difficult to cure, points to the persistent efforts of an intelligent power ever on the watch to overcome the puny efforts of man to frustrate the purpose of an Almighty power."

The celebrated alienist, Dr. —, gives it as his considered opinion: "Nothing has so impressed me with a belief in the incurable religious nature of man than the fact that in not a single case of lunacy have I discovered the instinct of religion absent. I have seen men who in their sad state have become a danger to all that were once nearest and dearest to them, who have doubted the most obvious of facts, and have seemed deaf to the plainest dictates of common sense. But never do they show themselves oblivious to the existence of a God. Even idiots never seem to lack this faith."

The Astronomer Royal says: "My years of research into the depths of stellar space, and my detailed survey of stellar and planetary bodies, have convinced me that they bear none of the usual marks which can be attributed to any intelligence known to us, or even conceivable by us. I am therefore compelled to believe in a supreme intelligence as the cause of all we see."

Professor — the eminent biologist, says: "As the most famous biologist in England I may truthfully say that in no part of my work have I ever come across a form of living

matter that was not the product of pre-existing conditions. I am also quite convinced that every bio-chemist of standing in the country is convinced that the secret of the production of living matter is to be found in the field that is their peculiar province. It is this that makes me convinced that there is a Power of which we know nothing, and of the nature of which we have no conception, which is the source of all forms of life."

Psychology provides the same testimony. Thus a Professor of applied psychology in one of our leading Universities writes: "Psychology is rapidly assuming the form of an exact science, and the methods by which this advance has been made is the method that is common to all the sciences. It is true also that the psychologists of every school pursue their studies without the least reference to the 'soul,' and the further the methods of science carries us, the more psychologists dispense with its existence, and the more difficult it is to find some known function for it to perform. It is these facts which supply to me the unshakable conviction that it is in the existence of a 'soul' that we find the line of demarcation between man and the animal world."

I am certain that if the *Morning Post* will publish these opinions, its readers will find them as intelligent and as comforting as anything it has yet issued on the relations between science and religion. We give it full permission to re-publish without the least acknowledgment.

CHAPMAN COHEN.
in Freethinker.

WHAT IS RELIGION ?

Col. Ingersoll's Address.

(*Continued from last issue.*)

What has been the effect of Christianity in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Ireland? What has religion done for Hungary or Austria? What was the effect of Christianity in Switzerland, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, in America? Let us be honest. Could these countries have been worse without religion? Could they have been worse had they had any other religion than Christianity?

Would Torquemada have been worse had he been a follower of Zoroaster? Would Calvin have been more bloodthirsty if he had believed in the religion of the South Sea Islanders? Would the Dutch have been more idiotic if they had denied the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and worshipped the blessed trinity of sausage, beer and cheese? Would John Knox have been any worse had he deserted Christ and become a follower of Confucius?

Take our own dear, merciful Puritan Fathers? What did Christianity do for them? They hated pleasure. On the door of life they hung the crape of death. They muffled all the bells of gladness. They made cradles by putting rockers on coffins. In the Puritan year there were twelve Decembers. They tried to do away with infancy and youth, with prattle of babes and the song of the morning.

The religion of the Puritan was an unadulterated curse. The Puritan believed the Bible to be the word of God, and this belief has always made those who held it cruel and wretched. Would the Puritan have been worse if he had adopted the religion of the North American Indians?

Let me refer to just one fact showing the influence of a belief in the Bible on human beings.

"On the day of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth she was presented with a Geneva Bible by an old man representing Time, with Truth standing by his side as a child. The Queen received the Bible, kissed it, and pledged herself to diligently read therein. In the dedication of this blessed Bible the Queen was piously exhorted to put all Papists to the sword."

In this incident we see the real spirit of Protestant lovers of the Bible. In other words, it was just as fiendish, just as infamous as the Catholic spirit.

Has the Bible made the people of Georgia kind and merciful? Would the lynchers be more ferocious if they worshiped gods of wood and stone?

To those who believe in the Uniformity of Nature, religion is impossible.

Can we affect the nature and qualities of substance by prayer? Can we hasten or delay the tides by worship? Can we change winds by sacrifice? Will kneeling give us wealth? Can we cure disease by supplication? Can we add to our knowledge by ceremony? Can we receive virtue or honor as alms? Are not the facts in the mental world just as stubborn—just as necessarily produced—as the facts in the material world? Is not what we call mind just as natural as what we call body?

Religion rests on the idea that Nature has a master and that this master will listen to prayer, that this master punishes and rewards, that he loves praise and flattery and hates the brave and free.

Has man obtained any help from heaven?

If we have a theory, we must have facts for the foundation. We must have corner-stones. We must not build on guesses, fancies, analogies or inferences. The structure must have a basement. If we build, we must begin at the bottom.

I have a theory and I have four corner-stones. The first stone is that matter-substance—cannot be destroyed, cannot be annihilated. The second stone is that force cannot be destroyed, cannot be annihilated. The third stone is that matter and force cannot exist apart—no matter without force—no force without matter. The fourth stone is that, that which cannot be destroyed could not have been created; that the indestructible is the uncreatable.

If these corner-stones are facts, it follows as necessity that matter and force are from and to eternity; that they can neither be increased nor diminished.

It follows that nothing has been or can be created; that there never has been or can be a creator. It follows that there could not have been any intelligence, any design back of matter and force. There is no intelligence without force. There is no force without matter. Consequently there could not by any possibility have been any intelligence, any force, back of matter.

It therefore follows that the supernatural does not and cannot exist. If these four corner-stones are facts, Nature has no master. If matter and force are from and to eternity, it follows as a necessity that no God exists; that no God created or governs the universe; that no God exists who answers prayer; no God who succors the oppressed; no God who pities the sufferings of innocence; no God who

cares for the slaves with scarred flesh, the mothers robbed of their babes; no God who rescues the tortured, and no God that saves a martyr from the flames. In other words it proves that man has never received any help from heaven; that all sacrifices have been in vain, and that all prayers have died unanswered in the heedless air. I do not pretend to know. I say what I think.

If matter and force have existed from eternity, it then follows that all that has been possible has happened, all that is possible is happening, and all that will be possible will happen. In the universe there is no chance, no caprice. Every event has parents. That which has not happened, could not. The present is the necessary product of all the past, the necessary cause of all the future.

In the infinite chain there is, and there can be, no broken, no missing link. The form and motion of every star, the climate of every world, all forms of vegetable and animal life, all instinct, intelligence and conscience, all assertions and denials, all vices and virtues, all thoughts and dreams, all hopes and fears, are necessities. Not one of the countless things and relations in the universe could have been different.

If matter and force are from eternity, then we can say that man had no intelligent creator, that man was not a special creation. We now know, if we know anything, that Jehovah, the divine potter, did not mix and mould clay into the forms of men and women, and then breathe the breath of life into these forms.

We now know that our first parents were not foreigners. We know that they were natives of this world, produced here, and that their life did not come from the breath of any god. We now know, if we know anything, that the universe is

natural, and that men and women have been naturally produced. We now know our ancestors, our pedigree. We have the family tree.

We have all the links of the chain, twenty-six links inclusive from monad to man. We did not get our information from inspired books. We have fossil facts and living forms.

From the simplest creatures, from blind sensation, from organism, from one vague want, to a single cell with a nucleus, to a hollow ball filled with fluid, to a cup with double walls, to a flat worm, to a something that begins to breathe, to an organism that has a spinal cord, to a link between the invertebrate, to one that has a cranium—a house for a brain—to one with fins, still onward to one with fore and hinder fins, to the reptile mammalia, to the marsupials, to the lemurs, dwellers in trees, to the simiadae, to the pithecanthropi, and lastly, to man.

We know the paths that life has traveled. We know the footsteps of advance. They have been traced. The last link has been found. For this we are indebted, more than to all others, to the greatest of biologists, Ernst Hackel.

We now believe that the universe is natural and we deny the existence of the supernatural.

For thousands of years men and women have been trying to reform the world. They have created gods and devils, heavens and hells; they have written sacred books, performed miracles, built cathedrals and dungeons; they have crowned and uncrowned kings and queens; they have tortured and imprisoned, flayed alive and burned; they have preached and prayed; they have tried promises and threats; they have coaxed and persuaded; they have preached and

taught, and in countless ways have endeavored to make people honest, temperate, industrious and virtuous: they have built hospitals and asylums, universities and schools, and seem to have done their very best to make mankind better and happier, and yet they have not succeeded.

Why have the reformers failed? I will tell them why. Ignorance, poverty, and vice are populating the world. The gutter is a nursery. People unable even to support themselves fill the tenements, the huts and hovels with children. They depend on the Lord, on luck and charity. They are not intelligent enough to think about consequences or to feel responsibility. At the same time they do not want children, because a child is a curse, a curse to them and to itself. The babe is not welcome, because it is a burden. These unwelcome children fill the jails and prisons, the asylums and hospitals, and they crowd the scaffolds. A few are rescued by chance or charity, but the great majority are failures. They become vicious, ferocious. They live by fraud and violence, and bequeath their vices to their children.

Against this inundation of vice the forces of reform are helpless, and charity itself becomes an unconscious promoter of crime.

Failure seems to be the trade mark of Nature. Why? Nature has no design, no intelligence. Nature produces without purpose, sustains without intention and destroys without thought. Man has a little intelligence, and he should use it. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind.

The real question is, can we prevent the ignorant, the poor, the vicious, from filling the world with their children?

Can we prevent this Missouri of ignorance and vice from emptying into the Mississippi of civilization? Must the world forever remain the victim of ignorant passion? Can the world be civilized to that degree that consequences will be taken into consideration by all?

Why should men and women have children that they cannot take care of, children that are burdens and curses? Why? Because they have more passion than intelligence, more passion than conscience, more passion than reason.

You cannot reform these people with tracts and talk. You cannot reform these people with preach and creed. Passion is, and always has been, deaf. These weapons of reform are substantially useless. Criminals, tramps, beggars and failures are increasing every day. The prisons, jails, poor-houses and asylums are crowded. Religion is helpless. Law can punish, but it can neither reform criminals nor prevent crime. The tide of vice is rising. The war that is now being waged against the forces of evil is as hopeless as the battle of the fireflies against the darkness of night.

There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty and vice must stop populating the world. This cannot be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. This cannot be done by religion or by law, by priest or by hangman. This cannot be done by force, physical or moral.

To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible savior of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.

This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are then born will be welcome. They will be clasped with glad hands to happy breasts. They will fill homes with light and joy.

Men and women who believe that slaves are purer, truer, than the free, who believe that fear is a safer guide than knowledge, that only those are really good who obey the commands of others, and that ignorance is the soil in which the perfect, perfumed flower of virtue grows, will with protesting hands hide their shocked faces.

Men and women who think that light is the enemy of virtue, that purity dwells in darkness, that it is dangerous for human beings to know themselves and the facts in Nature that affect their well being, will be horrified at the thought of making intelligence the master of passion.

But I look forward to the time when men and women by reason of their knowledge of consequences, of the morality born of intelligence, will refuse to perpetuate disease and pain, will refuse to fill the world with failures. . . . Religion can never reform mankind because religion is slavery.

Never yet has law formed a great man;
'tis liberty that breeds giants and heroes.

Schiller.

BIRTH CONTROL FOR THE PRODIGAL

There can be heard today in the wilderness of our national ignorance, indifference and inertia, the voices of prophets crying for birth control for the prodigal. Some of them urge it on humanitarian grounds, some for eugenic reasons. They say that the unfit are breeding wantonly & recklessly, while the college graduate sports his one and a quarter child or whatever the fraction is. They say it should be stopped, both for the sake of prodigal and for the sake of the race. But especially, I believe, it should be stopped for the sake of the elder brother whose burden is becoming unbearable because of the prodigal's fertility. Today the life of every responsible citizen of the United States is shadowed, weighted, weakened by the life of some prodigal son of his father's.

Our government spends every year five billion dollars upon the care of the dependent and delinquent classes—nearly three times what it spends upon the public schools. Now, if these charges were reduced in number to one half, we could, obviously, double what we now spend on the schools: This in turn would mean a still further reduction in dependency and delinquency. It would mean, too, more opportunity to develop to his highest possibilities the hitherto neglected "normal" child who is neither dependent nor delinquent.

Our immigration laws prevent the entrance into the country of persons likely to become public charges. Birth control would prevent, or do much to prevent, their entrance into the world. This would be simpler and cheaper and more comfortable all round. The ranks of the unfit would be painlessly thinned out.

Most economists and sociologists agree that large families among those least able to support them is one of the principal causes of poverty. Birth control for the poor offers the best way out.

The average unskilled laborer today has a family that most college graduates would find themselves unable to support. The children in this family, most of whom in these humane days grow up to maturity, are under a tremendous handicap from birth and even before. They are under-nourished and undernurtured; they live in unsanitary tenements and play in the crowded streets. Most of them leave school at fourteen, and drift from one low-paid, unskilled job to another, building up the habit of failure. They marry young and the grind begins again.

The McDonough family, once neighbors of ours, are typical of this group. Harold McDonough is a garage mechanic earning thirty-five dollars a week. Dot, his wife, who is still pretty in a red-cheeked, blousy way, has had six children. The oldest, Jack, ran away to sea; Belle, the next in age, is in a sanitarium for tuberculosis; Claribel, aged twelve, has twice been brought home at night by a policewoman. There is a boy of nine being treated at the dispensary for eye trouble, and twins of six, these last three born in a public maternity ward. And the provident middle class pays extra for medical care so that the McDonoughs can get theirs free; the tabloids and screen comedies thrive at the expense of higher forms of entertainment because there are so many Dots and Claribels.

Now a knowledge of contraception would not have made the McDonoughs

into intelligent or successful people. But there might have been few enough of them to be self-supporting. Belle would not be dying at the public expense. The younger ones would not have been born either at the public expense or their own. There would be fewer McDonough children in the schools, fewer McDonough parents for the children of the next generation. The worst of them, and their name is legion, is not that they are wicked or especially vicious, but that, in their present numbers, they drag down the level of our national culture, prosperity, and civic virtue. And when they become public charges, as many of them are bound to do, it means that the college professor, the engineer, the responsible and intelligent element generally are postponing their own families because the McDonoughs are so expensive.

Juvenile court workers will tell you that the majority of the Juvenile delinquents are the younger children in large families. This is partly because they get a poorer physical start and less care than their older brothers and sisters, but perhaps even more because they are made to feel from earliest childhood that they were unwanted. What could be more deadly to one's self-respect and morals than that? That birth control among the poor would mean fewer of these pathetic specimens seems self-evident.

None of the hundred clinics now functioning in the United States has been in operation long enough to enable us to estimate long-distance results with any accuracy. One of those anticipated is what Dr. Robinson in her book *Seventy Birth Control Clinics* calls a transfer of fertility. By that is meant that, with the decline of families of over four children among the poor, will come an increase in

the number of children in the hitherto very small families of the middle-income class, especially the professional group. While the laborer's wife will have four instead of eight children it is hoped that the professor's or the engineer's wife will have two instead of one. In other words, the elder brother, not having to support so many children of the prodigal, can have more of his own.

This transfer of fertility is one reason why an extension of birth control knowledge to the underprivileged would not decrease the population as much as some statesmen fear. Another reason is that with the decline in the birth rate, will go a decline in the death rate, particularly that of mothers and babies. Today seventeen thousand mothers die in childbirth every year in the United States, and between seven and ten per cent of the infants. In Holland, where birth control clinics have been in operation for fifty years, the saving in maternal and child life has been so great that population has actually increased. A third reason why birth control is not de-populating is that the sterility of many women who want to and should bear children is successfully treated by these clinics. These are results of birth control which even its opponents must approve.

There are, of course, many people who do not care one way or the other what the quality of our population is going to be, and who are impervious to the sufferings of the mothers who bear unwanted children year after year. But I have yet to see a person who enjoyed paying his tax bills. One of the most obvious ways to keep taxes down is to keep down the kind of people who have got to live on our tax money.

There are those who approve of birth control, and who think: "Everybody

knows all about it anyway, so why bother? If there are still those who do not practise it, it is because they do not want to." The experience of the clinics contradicts this. According to the findings of the Clinical Research Bureau study, as reported in the February REVIEW, the majority of women coming to the clinic have used some kind of family limitation methods before coming for advice, but with unsuccessful or injurious results.

Many persons who concede the need for birth control on humanitarian grounds, fear its effect on sex morality. What they fail to see is that with the means for separating sex experience from parenthood a new morality is being born. Restraints imposed by good taste must replace those imposed by fear of biological consequences. Contraception, to be sure, like every other tool, is subject to abuse. Our servant, the automobile, not only kills and maims thousands of people every year but has greatly facilitated crime and immortality. Yet who would seriously suggest prohibiting its sale or use?

The people who object to the practice of contraception on moral grounds have little to say about the immorality caused by other means of family limitation—abstinence, abortion, late marriages. Moreover they fail to realize that the new sex code has brought about a morality which judges actions by their effect upon the persons involved, rather than by their conformity with ancient oracles or tribal taboos. A morality based on individual needs and inner restraint is replacing the old shotgun morality based on fear of God in the shape of biological laws.

And, after all, since it is the responsible, homekeeping stable sort of people who are most inclined toward bringing up families, children will be born in responsible, stable homes—when only those who *want* children need *have* them. Birth control may yet produce a race so conservative that the few radical spirits surviving will clamor for a return of the prodigal to stir things up.

MARGARET LEE WOODBURY,
(Birth Control Review).

If ever social planning were needed, surely it is here! Birth control is a reality, which in the short space of a few decades has had tremendous social consequences, and it is precisely for that reason that our society must frankly face and in so far as possible intelligently seek methods of guidance and direction over this mighty instrument in its hands.

HERBERT APTEKAR.

Man belongs neither to his language nor to his race; he belongs to himself alone; for he is a free being—that, a moral being.

RENAN.

RITUAL IN JAPAN.

Burial Rites of Buddhistic Origin.

Before the coming of Buddhism, Japan had no fixed manner of burying the dead or holding funerals. From ancient records we learn that in the old days dead bodies were often cast into the sea or buried in the mountains, without much ceremony. Buddhism brought to Japan a new and elaborate system of burial. Buddhist rites became most prevalent, although Shinto and Chinese style ceremonies were also adopted for burying the dead.

Funeral customs vary greatly according to districts, but the ordinary funeral is mostly a Buddhist one, although the Imperial family and noblemen follow the Shinto custom writes Mock Joya in the "Tourist."

The basic rules for the Buddhist funeral are given in an ancient Sutra. It says, "Cleaned with hot water, dressed in cotton cloth, placed in a golden coffin, sprinkled with ointment covered with aromatics, burned in a fire, bones collected and placed in a tower."

According to this instruction, formerly the dead were cleaned with hot water. The task was called "yukan" (hot water bathing), which was an important part of the funeral ceremony in the past. This practice has died out in cities, but in some rural districts it is still observed. The dead are dressed in white cotton cloth, not only because the Sutra says so, but also because white is considered pure and clean.

Formerly, valuables and clothing were buried with the body but this is no longer practised. Among country people copper coins, or a piece of paper on which the outline of the coin is roughly painted,

are placed in the coffin. It is believed that "Sanzu-no-kawa" (Sanzu river) divides this world from "Goku-raku" (paradise), and the coins are required to pay for the ferry ride across the river. Also it is still considered a long journey to "Gokuraku," and therefore straw sandals and a strong staff to lean on are placed in the coffin to aid the traveller.

Members of the family, friends and relatives gather to watch by the dead all through the night. This is called "Otsuya" (Pass the night together), and even to-day "Otsuya" is the important part of the funeral rites. It is the last occasion to be with the dead, and throughout the night Buddhist scriptures are recited, and offerings made. All bring offerings to the dead, flowers, candles, sweets, incense and gold. Those gathering at "Otsuya" are given food and drink though meat or fish is seldom served.

The funeral procession used to leave at night, but to-day it can be held at any hour. Cremation in Japan is as old as Buddhism, and most of the dead have been cremated.

The burial does not end the funeral service in Japan, for various services are held for many days. The funeral is one of the most important social functions in Japan, and not only do relatives and friends come to participate, but all neighbours share arrangements connected with the funeral.

Because of traditional Buddhist beliefs, the Japanese think that the dead do not go immediately to the other world. There is a neutral life ("Chu-in") between this life and the other. During this period one is neither dead nor alive,

hovering between death and life. He is not in this world but again is not in the other. So this period is called "Chu-in" (neutral negative).

Because of this belief, the dead person is not treated as one who has entirely gone out of this life, although his body is already buried or cremated. Everyday food is offered to him. The spirit of the dead must eat, since it yet lives a strenuous life. It is during this period of neutral negative that the Great Judge will decide to what sphere the dead shall be sent, either to "Gokuraku" (Paradise) or to "Gigku" (Hell).

In this period two judges will appear one after the other to examine the record—the deeds, crimes and good works—the dead had in this world. According to the result of these examinations, his future fate will be decided.

But it is not this examination alone that the dead man passes through during "Chu-in" period. He is really between life and death, because seven times will he be returned to life only to die again. Only after his seventh death can he leave this world entirely, and until then the spirit, stays at his home hovering between death and life. At every death, he approaches his real end.

Since the people believe in incarnation, the spirit never dies, but only takes a different form. What form it will take after the earthly death is decided by the Great Judge according to the evidence presented after the examination by the two judges.

The seven deaths come at intervals of seven days. One dies: his family laments, holds the funeral service and buries or cremates the body. But his spirit lives with his family. Then when the seventh day comes he dies again.

On the fourteenth day, he has his third death, and so on, until the seventh death, which comes on the forty-ninth day. Each death is an occasion for family worship.

The first death is lamented by his family and friends, because at that death the body disappears. But the second death also is important, and "Shonanuka" (first seventh day service) is the first elaborate religious service after death. Priests are called, sacred sutras are recited and the family and friends join in the prayer that the dead person eventually will find his way to "Gokuraku". This service is significant, because of its bearing upon the fate of the spirit of the dead.

In old families and in rural districts, "Shonanuka" is an occasion when all who knew the dead come and pray for his salvation, making offerings and burning incense and candles. It is believed that the size of the gathering, the earnestness with which the mourning persons pray and the worthy tales of the dead related by those present will influence the decision of the judges.

The dead do not leave this world entirely until the forty-ninth day after death. It is commonly believed that for the period of forty-nine days, the spirit remains under the roof of the house where the man had lived. So, on the forty-ninth day, his final farewell to the earthly world takes place.

The service held on this day is very important, and "Shijukunichi" (forty-ninth day) is observed strictly by all families. It also marks the end of the first period of mourning.

The "Shijukunichi" service is held either at home or at the Buddhist temples, before the tables, inscribed with the Buddhistic name of the dead. Candles

are lighted, incense is burned and priests recite sutras. Sincere, long prayers are offered by members of the family, friends and relatives.

But this service is not one of sorrow; it is one held with the joyful realization that the dead has gone to "Gokuraku." Prayers and offerings made at the time of the first six deaths have influenced the ten judges to give a favourable verdict, it is believed. For the sake of the future life of the dead, members of the family and friends have made sacrifices, have abstained from eating meat and fish, have forgone their accustomed pleasures. Dressing in dark mourning costumes, they have prayed for the reincarnation of the spirit in a better and more beautiful life.

Because it is believed that the spirit does not leave the house until after his seventh death on "Shinukunichi", no personal effects of the dead are touched. Kimonos, for instance, have been carefully cared for during the forty-nine days, since the spirit that used them in life is still in the house.

But when the "Shijukunichi" service is held, and the spirit of the dead has found its proper place of rebirth or gone to "Gokuraku" inventory of his personal effects is made. Articles are distributed among the members of his family, friends, relatives, servants and acquaintances as "katami" (keepsakes). This distribution is a tedious and important affair, because none who has been in close contact with the dead should be forgotten, and the selection of articles is made according to the degree of intimacy. Often disappointment regarding articles received as "katami" has caused a break in relations with the family of the dead.

Thus, with the "Shijukunichi" service

the dead finally leaves the world, and his earthly friendships terminate.

"Urabon-e," more commonly called "Born" is a corruption of Sanskrit "Ullanbana." This is a service held by the children of the dead to express their gratitude to their parents. Thus, it was first held for parents and grandparents, but gradually it came to be observed for the other dead as well. "Urabon-e" comes on the fifteenth day of the seventh month according to the lunar calendar.

As to the origin of this service, there is a very interesting story. Once there was a man in India who wished to see what life his dead parents were leading. He saw in his vision that his mother was suffering from hunger, not having been able to get anything to eat since her death. So he prepared a generous bowl of food for her. But as she approached the bowl it was filled with fire and she could not take it. In disappointment, he asked the help of a famous Buddhist priest, who said that the sins his mother had committed in her earthly life brought the present punishment upon her, and that she could only be saved by the mercy of Budha. Therefore he called several priests and held a mass for his mother. This mass was held on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and it saved his mother from the agony of hunger. From this story the "Urabon-e" service originated.

Coming to Japan, it has been greatly changed, and has become not only a religious service, but also an occasion of joy. The Japanese people commonly believe that on the day the spirits of the dead return to the house where they used to live in their earthly life.

To guide the coming of the spirit, lanterns are lighted at every house where the service is held. Such lanterns are

often elaborate, although they are always made of white paper and add a picturesque note to the "Bon" service. In many districts, the people follow the custom of lighting thousands of small lanterns and letting them float down the rivers or upon the sea. In a summer night, it is a picturesque lovely sight.

As the service originated in the old Indian story of a mother's hunger after death various foods, especially vegetables, are placed for the dead to come and satisfy their hunger. Such vegetables are not used afterwards, having been partaken of by the spirits. So these vegetables are floated down the rivers or tossed into the sea.

Probably, intending to amuse the spirits, on the "Bon" evening, community dances are held in rural districts. This is on some lawn and the dance continues throughout the night. It is one of the most interesting phases of rural life and the people always look forward to "Bon". Formerly at many places it was customary to have markets for various products on "Bon" evening, since the people had no other business on that evening but to go out and amuse themselves.

Happiness of the spirit of the dead in the after life depends largely upon prayers and offerings made by his family and friends, left behind in this world. This traditional belief is due to the above-mentioned legend of a certain Indian priest who saved the spirit of his mother from hunger and misery by an elaborate Buddhist mass and prayers.

After "Shijuku-nichi," the spirit of the dead finally leaves this world and enters a new life, reincarnated. He might appear as another man, a woman, an

animal, a bird or an insect. Whatever life he might be leading after death, those left behind are able to influence his happiness by prayers and religious services. If he be leading a miserable life, he can be saved and helped to a better existence.

So the services after death are very important to his happiness. "Nenki" (yearly service) are numerous. "Ikkai-ki" (first service) comes on the first anniversary of the death and "Sankai-ki" (third service) comes on the second. It is strange that there is no "second service" and the second anniversary is called "third service." But the Japanese way of counting years and ages is used and all the following services are also made according to the Japanese way of counting. On the sixth anniversary comes "Shichikai-ki" (seventh service), the thirteenth service on the twelfth anniversary, the seventeenth service on the sixteenth anniversary, the twenty-third service on the twenty-second anniversary, the twenty-seventh service on the twenty-sixth anniversary, the thirty-third service on the thirty-second and the fiftieth service on the forty-ninth.

After the fiftieth service, a service is held every fiftieth year. These services are special occasions, which should be observed by all families hoping for the happiness of the dead.

These "Nenki" are great occasions, and people who do not hold such services for their ancestors are considered unfilial and dishonourable. Their filial piety is often judged by the impressiveness of such services.

So even after death, a Japanese is feted by his descendants and friends for many years at certain fixed intervals.

RATIONALISM.

Atheism is by no means a synonym for rationalism. Apart from the fact that rationalism need not necessarily lead to atheism, it may be well doubted whether a fanatic belief in atheism, with which one comes across so often amongst the Rationalists (the fashionable thing to be these days), is at all consistent with rationalism truly conceived and well understood.

The village atheist who has an unshakable belief in the non existence of God is as rational as the theist who has an equally profound belief in the 'existence of God'. Each of them has a simple belief in his credo, endowed with all the intensity of fervour and passion with which a devout follower of 'Islam' is expected to believe in 'Koran.' To the one (the theist) it is only a matter of setting on the right path a soul gone astray; to the other it is only a matter of convincing the dull brains of the former of that which is so evident. Neither of them care to examine their own ideas.

Whether or not God exists, I do not know. No Rationalist does. But in attempting to form an opinion about the existence or non-existence of God, we have not merely to see whether there is any reason for His existence, but also whether there is any reason for his non-existence. For, if to uphold an idea without reason is irrational, it is equally irrational to denounce an idea without one, if not actually more so. I say, if not actually more so, because though ideas based on no positive reason have to be considered, they cannot so readily be denounced on the same grounds. As a matter of fact we have no right to reject a workable hypothesis unless a definite reason for doing so can be shown.

As Mr. Bertrand Russel points out and everybody would readily agree with the point, it is generally always possible to satisfactorily interpret a given set of phenomena in several ways. Now, of these several interpretations, why should I not accept the one that is most congenial to me, the one most suitable to my temperament, and one which is most in accord with all my pet prejudices? I see no reason why I should be compelled to accept the view that happens to be in fashion with the rationalists or be denounced as a theist.

Moreover it may be the cosmos does not consist of what may be called entirely rational phenomena. Indeed that seems to be the verdict of modern physics. I fail to see in line with the rationalist who is ready enough to accept as true a Bohr's account of the behaviour of an atom, even when it is contrary to reason and yet insist upon rejecting the testimony of a Patanjali, even if what he has to say be not positively contrary to reason, simply because it is the rationalist way of doing things. Or is it because it is the way of our western masters?

It would be interesting to discuss the reasons which have led so many sages and philosophers to declare their belief in God, as also the arguments they have advanced in favour of their belief. But as the space does not permit me I have to restrain myself.

Even the rationalist need not forget that there are things other than reason on which many of our beliefs have to be based. Granted there is no reason to believe in the existence of a God. But neither is there any reason to believe in one's own existence. According to the traditional school of philosophy we have

only an intuition that we exist. Yet we have a profound belief in our existence. The rationalist would be irritated beyond measure, if one were to suggest to him that he did not exist because there was no reason why he should exist and that the world could do very well without him. And strangely enough he proceeds on the same basis, to demonstrate the non-existence of God. Anyway, it would be undisputedly truer to say that the world

can get on very well without the rationalist, than to say that it could get on as well without God.

That we do not have the intuition that others claim to have and that we may not see things that others might have seen is no reason why we should call them 'liars.' It is not necessary to reject what one cannot comprehend.

V. PITTIE.

RELIGION AND CONDUCT.

Prof. R. D. Karve fined for holding Wild Views

Prof. R. D. Karve, member of our Association and Editor of the Marathi Magazine "Samaj Swasthya" who was charged under section 292 I. P. C. for having published an obscene article in his paper was convicted by Mr. I. N. Mehta, Presidency Magistrate, Fourth Court, and sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 100/-.

The article in question was entitled "Vyabhiharacha Prashna" ("Problem of Adultery") and was published in the September (1931) issue of the above magazine, is said to have advocated that virginity was not necessarily a virtue and that under certain conditions extra-marital relations may be allowed in the case of married women.

The Magistrate ordered that the copies of the magazine which had been seized by the police should be returned to the accused after the pages in which the article in question appeared was destroyed.

In delivering judgment the Magistrate discussed at length whether the article in question was obscene within the meaning of Section 292 I. P. C. The contention

of the prosecution was that the article read as a whole was detrimental to public morals and calculated to produce a pernicious effect in depraving and corrupting those whose minds were open to such immoral influences.

Continuing the Magistrate said that according to the accused's own statement his aim was to establish that adultery was not a sin and that though there were religious and conventional restrictions on adultery there was no advantage in observing such restrictions. The accused had further held that virginity was not necessarily a virtue in unmarried girls and that even if freedom was given in these matters there were advantages from a scientific point of view.

The accused had not even advocated a civil contract between unmarried males and females. Even Soviet Russia which was supposed to have the most advanced views in sex matters did require that males and females, who wished to unite, should register their marriages. Even Dr. Norman Haire and Mr. Bertrand Russel, whom the Magistrate quoted had not advocated wild views.

The Magistrate therefore held that the accused was guilty under Section 292 I. P. C. but considering the circumstances he sentenced the accused to a fine of Rs. 100.

* * * *

Caste Hindus have their Revenge.

At the conclusion of meeting held to condemn the recently-concluded Raje-Moonje Pact and to ventilate the grievances of the Untouchables, some of these Untouchables marched to a well and drew water from it. As a retaliatory measure the cast Hindus have thrown filth and dirt into the well and thus rendered it unfit for use.

* * * *

Magistrate grants right of way to Untouchables.

The Magistrate at Guruvayam has passed a judgement favouring the right of way for all classes over certain roads which were so far reserved for high caste men and women. It is understood that the Zamorin of Calcutta who is the Chief Trustee of the Guruvayum Temple intends filing an appeal against the order. In the mean time additional police have

been stationed to prevent any clashes between the temple employees and the Satyagraha volunteers.

Disparity of Age in Marriage.

The Baroda Government have over the signature of the Legal-Rememberancer published a draft amendment to the Prevention of Child Marriage Act, in order to prevent the marriage of persons between whom there may be disparity of age.

It lays down that permission shall not be given for contracting marriage of between a man above 45 with a girl below 18, and even if such permission be obtained it shall be considered invalid with the result that the bridegroom or the guardian of the girl, giving assent or assistance to the said unlawful marriage, and others who may abet, shall render themselves liable to six months imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 600 or either.

Objections, if any, have been invited to the amendment. It may be recalled that recently the Baroda Child Marriage Prevention Act was amended and the marriageable age of boys and girls was raised from 16 and 12 respectively to 18 and 14.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. Articles are accepted for publication only on condition that they are not sent to any other journal. For further information write to the Hon'y Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

God before Country.

My friend, 'The Big Brother' has been very busy of late. His large heart that has been full of peace talks and yearnings for fight has been further taxed by the coming in of Ayesha. However, he found time to accept the invitation of the Rotary Club where he addressed the gathering on 'his view-point'. That is highly

creditable in these days of copy and no original thinking. His political opinions do not concern this journal. Being a Maulana and speaking after a good lunch, his thoughts naturally turned towards God. He is a God's man and places God before his country. There are two religions that teach this to their followers—The Roman Catholic and the Mahomedan.

Right from their childhood they are taught to feel this way. If they had at their service the methods of Huxley's "Brave New World", they might have started the conditioning process from the embryonic period. The ravages caused by Christians who followed this principle is well known to all students of history. Neither is the record of Mahomedanism spotless; its progress has been by the sword and every true follower of the Prophet considers the will of Allah before everything else. The menace of these religions is that they persist to apply 2000 year old ideas to modern conditions, and this is what a fanatical follower of these religions also does. However liberal one may be, still there are features in Mahomedanism that are highly objectionable; for example, the purdah, the limitation of divorce facilities only to men, the prohibition of liquors and pork, the insistence on circumcision as an initiatory rite. A good Muslim cannot question these, even though his education and cold reason may show these tenets to be unnecessary and ridiculous. Attempting to regulate modern progress with such ideas is to try to run the Deccan Queen with a pair of oxen. And the unfortunate part of it is that very soon these people hypnotise themselves to such an extent that they will not let God progress if even He wants to. Everthing new, be it social or material, is scrutinised and if it departs ever so little from the ancient code, it is loudly denounced. Fanatic religion and intense local patriotism are the two disruptive forces that hinder the fusion of the various lots of the human race. Take our own country. Here religious philosophies and superstitious observances have been the cause of most of the communal riots. Workers in the field of science are daily piling

up facts which point to the basic unity of everthing in life. Once this basic unity is well grasped, a great advance towards peace will have been made. But people who seek unity in God are further from the goal, because the prospects of there ever being only one God are very remote. The number and varieties of Gods depends on the flights of human fancy. These various fancied ideas of God irregularly crack through every strata of human society, and tremendously increase the difficulties of repair. Those that put God before their country are wasting their time here and should not delay their departure to God's own country where the delights of eternal paradise are awaiting them. Euthanasia is always easy.

* * * *

Divine Loot.

Residents of the city of Bombay may have often seen a Hindu woman carrying on her head a basket full of grass and leading a cow. She rings a bell and calls upon all the Hindu residents to offer charity to the Sacred Cow. A nickel piece comes flying from the hands of a Bania lady on the fourth floor and our friend below promptly offers a pice worth of green grass to her own cow. She kills two birds at one stroke, feeds her own cow and sells her grass at a tremendous profit. This I consider as an example of 'divine loot'; not that divinity has anything to do with it for I believe any God, even if his name be written with a small 'g,' would be a little more honest. This shameless exploitation is carried on in open daylight and condoned by all parties because it is religious. The same lady who threw the nickel piece would probably wrangle with her grocer for half an hour if the measure of ghee is

short by a fraction. But she will not question anything done in the name of Madhu and Shanker. Again, on a dark cloudy evening during the monsoons, as you are sitting reading by the window, you hear at a distance deep guttural voices repeating "Allah deingeh"; gradually the voices become louder and as gradually they fade away. Allah is good to them, because in one round these four or five Mahomedans collect enough to last them, for a fortnight. Sometimes on a morning, right in front of your gate, is an able-bodied man singing with a nasal twang some Arabic verses. He is a Muslim Fakir; he does not beg for alms, he simply demands them. These and many others in our country are privileged men whose one function is to defraud gullible people in the name of God. They are just a fraction. Our temples where golden gods squat on jewelled gadis under golden canopies are monuments to this game. Millions of rupees are immobilised into sheet-metal, while hunger, ignorance and death ravage the land. It may be said that these temples do a lot of charity. They feed many beggars and sadhus. To realise the type that is fed, you have to pass along Prarthana Samaj or Mumbadevi on an afternoon. Nowhere else can you find such filth and laziness. In the present condition of our country it is impossible to stop the revenues of the gods. But since the administration of these revenues is in human hands, I claim that the money can be spent better. The country wants relief in so many ways and no god who loves his followers would take umbrage if his coffers are emptied in their interests. Facilities for education, cheaper and sanitary houses, cooperative societies, medical relief could all be provided from the funds of these temples.

In the Bombay City medical relief has been handicapped because of the financial stringency under which the government is labouring. Could not some of the money that is rotting be donated to this purpose? There is so much of unemployment; these temples could come to the relief of their followers by starting some industries which will provide work. Leaving aside the reformers, even the orthodox would be happy if the benefits of their offerings to the the gods devolved on them during their life-time. Then why not make an attempt?

* * * *

Houses of Worship.

In view of the excessive sensitiveness of the ignorant mob towards religious affairs, the resolution recently discussed in the Bombay Corporation is very timely. Bombay has had a fair bit of trouble because of the awkward situations of these houses, and because of the reluctance of the authorities to wound the so-called religious feelings of the crowd. We have the Round Temple in the centre of a road, we had the construction of a road held up because a mosque was in the way, we had a small riot because a bajan in a temple offended the dignity of a rival god in a mosque. Music before mosques has been a very fruitful source of trouble. Last week, the Nasik police had to keep a 72 hours vigil as the Mohorrum procession had to pass by a temple. Educated people cannot understand why others should not be permitted to carry on their normal avocations before a temple or a mosque. Why should the beating of drums be distasteful to the Mahomedan or Christian God? Why are the gods so jealous? Being present everywhere, God could be worshipped anywhere if he is so insistent on

worship. Only for the sake of convenience are these houses of worship built and once these are built, nobody has the right to dictate to others as to how they should conduct themselves outside these places. As matters now stand, they look like two fighting cocks, one ready to pounce on the other if he dares to cross him with his crest high. If it was the same god everytime that had to lower his crest, it would have seemed sensible, but now, by agreement, they do it mutually. Where the advantage lies, I fail to see. Anyway as it will take a long time to remove these superstitions and prejudices, the resolution discussed in the Corporation may ease matters for the future. Whenever a new place of worship is to be constructed, every educated man in the locality should protest. Bombay has too many temples and mosques; if anything their number should be diminished but never increased. The temples with their filthy tanks and dirty sadhus are a menace to the health of the city. But above all, these are the centres from where communal propaganda is carried out, these are the repositories of vast wealth which could be turned to better use, and therefore I submit that the Corporation should go further and not permit any more of these places to be constructed within the city of Bombay.

* * *

Mixed Marriages.

I offer my hearty congratulations to Mr. Dehlavi and his bride. Here has been a case of love calling to love, and youth calling to youth, but religion very nearly came in to spoil this romance. The bride has been a 'brick' as she has renounced everything for seeking happiness along

the road she thinks best. May the years to come bring them all that they desire.

The number of such mixed marriages is yet very small. I make a special mention of these mixed marriages as I consider them a distinct step towards the unity of this country. Prejudices are so deeply rooted that it needs people to have more than the average strength to marry out of their circle. The recent political movement has thrown many young men and women together. A large number of them are well-educated and capable of thinking and acting independently. At the moment their energies are all directed towards the solution of the political trouble. However, these moments of stress afford numerous occasions for forming and testing friendships. So, probably after the fight is over, we may learn that many of these friendships have matured into love and marriage, and we may have a fair number of mixed marriages.

There is no point in people changing their religion at the time of marriage. Time has now come to relegate religion to its proper place in Indian life and that place is quite a secondary one. All these mixed marriages must be civil contracts with facilities for easy divorce. It will be foolhardy to expect love to last for ever and to think that all marriages will be successful. For such as are happy, facilities for divorce will be of no use. But there is no gain in crushing sensitive minds by the weight of social convention and religious restrictions. To the bulk of modern Indian Youth, religion as has been practiced in this country, has no appeal. Therefore, when they are building a new home and a new India let them sweep away the cob-webs of religion.

ALI AKBAR.

THE ADVANTAGE OF A SCIENTIFIC HABIT OF MIND.

In our last issue I described the different attitudes of believers in the creeds towards unbelievers in the same in a cosmopolitan city like Bombay. We came to the conclusion that, apart from the community to which the unbeliever belongs, the attitude was one of indifference. The Christians, especially the Catholics, who are mostly imperfectly educated, narrow-minded and bigoted, generally assume that the unbeliever is a fool, an eccentric person, who, for some unaccountable reason, hates the Church and the priests; in other words, a much prejudiced person. Few have even a vague idea how he came by his unbelief. They are afraid or unwilling to find this out as they have no doubt that it is due to a serious moral lapse which has deprived the poor fellow of the grace of divine guidance which they, themselves, appear to possess so abundantly. Few Catholic priests will tell the truth about an unbeliever. A priest will usually hint that the "misguided" individual is a conceited ass who dares to question the truth and soundness of a religion founded by God Himself, and which so many, high and low, have believed during the centuries that have passed. He will not conceal the fact that he firmly believes the unbeliever to be a bad man who must be avoided as an infectious disease. Some of them will actually go to the length of maliciously doing him harm in his profession or business.

If I may be pardoned for quoting my own personal experience, after more than twenty-five years of peaceful rationalistic life in Bombay, I must say that I have enjoyed so far a splendid isolation, due

probably to the fact, that I have no community in this country, and that I have always carefully avoided mixing with Catholics and taking any part in their social activities. I have certainly on rare occasions received the attention of some over zealous and bigoted fellows in the shape of vulgar and abusive anonymous letters; but fortunately nothing more unpleasant. Even the Catholic priests of my locality, probably recognizing their own limitations, have studiously kept aloof and have never attempted to speak to me on the subject. It is only quite recently that such an attempt has been made, not by a priest, but by a kindly disposed medical man.

He is an aged medical practitioner who appears to be a sincere and honest Catholic. He informed me that he had made up his mind to tackle me on the subject as my occasional articles on rationalistic topics in the press have seriously perturbed him. It would appear that it was not without serious misgivings that he ventured to speak to me on the subject, as some priests and others have gravely warned him of the great danger of *doing* this. As, however, he prides himself on his strong will power and implicit faith in his religion, he said he stood in no danger of being confounded by me. Though I had not the slightest desire to convince him even if I could, yet, how could I refuse a generous soul, so anxious for the salvation of my own, the satisfaction of having it out? Our first debate was unfortunately marred by the impetuosity of his attack, due to his burning indignation, so he declared, to find himself face to face with Bombay's arch-infidel,—one responsible for destroying the faith of at least half a dozen Catholics.

This, by the way, was not much of a compliment to me as I think I can lay claim to the conversion of many more Catholics than that to Rationalism. But this is a digression. My friend warned me with real holy terror in his eyes that a terrible fate awaited me—my eternal damnation in Hell unless I came back to Catholicism!

We have had since, some more sober discussions on religion though, I am sorry to say, they have resulted in no advantage to either of us. A brief description of the same will probably convince most thoughtful people how sound is the dictum that to understand clearly the problems of religious beliefs and their relation with natural facts and phenomena, one must cultivate a scientific habit of mind which alone enables one to argue in an orderly and systematic manner. **Your opponent, of course, is expected to possess the necessary knowledge to make his points intelligible and interesting and also to understand yours.** Now my interlocutor while not claiming to be a learned person, said he had read enough to be convinced how erroneous we were not to believe in religion! I soon found out that it was not easy to argue with him, as he was ignorant of many things that make a discussion on the claims of a religion profitable and interesting. He knows of Anatomy, Chemistry and Physiology sufficient for the medical service; he is experienced in his profession and appears a thoughtful man. Unfortunately he does not appear to know anything of Geology, Paleontology, Biology, Astronomy and Astrophysics, Anthropology and History, Sciences which enable one to appraise properly the claims and doctrines of any religion. Of history, especially that of his Church, he knows

absolutely nothing. Under the circumstances, it became extremely difficult to pin him down to an orderly debate. He talked at random on many things, relevant and irrelevant. He spoke on the existence of God, immortality of the soul, the truth of Christianity, the existence of Heaven, Hell and the Devil with a cocksureness worthy of a simpleton. About the nature and origin of man for instance, he does not know anything about the scientific evidence that has been collected pointing to man's animal origin, his antiquity and his struggle upwards!

He was very surprised when, in answer to his rather naive question, why I do not believe in Catholicism, I replied that if Catholicism is true then all the discoveries and conclusions of modern science and modern thought are false and are only the delusions of lunatics, or "*les divagations des idiots*," He could not understand this. Things are too vague and confused in his mind to realize the truth of this. Yet, as I explained to him, the very foundation of his religion, its *raison d'être* absolutely depends on the very important question whether man was created as described in the Bible or was evolved as science teaches. If science is right, then one of the most important dogmas of Christianity, without which the whole religion becomes meaningless and ridiculous, goes to pieces. I explained to him that this is the reason why his Church will never accept the truth of evolution and will have to stick to the literal meaning of the story of Genesis. At the same time, I warned him that some religious writers, perhaps feeling that with the spread of sound knowledge the whole position will soon become untenable, were trying to hint that even if man owes his origin to an animal ancestry as science proves, Almighty God infused an immortal

soul in him during the course of his evolution and hence his unique position in Nature. This sort of quibbling, they imagine, would reconcile science with religion, though at the same time they assure their dupes that evolution, in the Darwinian sense, is not proved and is not accepted by most eminent scientists! As regard the nature of that soul, my interlocutor, when pressed to define it could not, as is the case with the rest, do so, except to say that it was a "Spirit," a word which they think explains every thing. He was really bewildered when I pointed out to him the many difficulties in accepting this belief.

The poor man had to fall back on the mystery of revelation and frankly admit that, for his part, he fully believes the story of Adam and Eve, the Original Sin and the rest. This is how a Catholic argues. As one may guess after the foregoing, it was next to useless to discuss with him the question of the existence of God. His idea of God is really that of a Polynesian in the refined garb of Catholicism—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one in three and three in one. On this point, however, there seemed to be some contradiction in his mind because when I pointed out to him that this idea of God was a primitive one, despite all the sophism he has heard from priests on the subject, he suddenly said that he was no believer in a Personal God. No! he did not believe God to be a bearded old man in the skies dressed in blue as children, women and ignorant people believe. He believed in a Supreme Power who animates all things though he cannot define that Power any more than he could the Soul of man,—a shapeless spirit who can feel and live! When reminded that he could not call himself a Catholic unless he believes

in a Personal God as defined in the Nicene Creed he appeared confused and surprised. There can be no doubt that some good Catholics with sufficient culture and intelligence, begin to recognize the childish teaching of their religion about God, a Being described as Omnipotent yet with evident limitations as He does not appear to have any power over the "fallen angels" who also are His creatures, for, what could be easier for an Omnipotent Being than to annihilate them and have peace for ever in the Universe; a Being Omniscient who did not foresee the failure of His own creation as far as our planet and its inhabitants are concerned; an intelligent Being who required the blood of His only son—according to religion, Himself—to satisfy Himself when He certainly could have pleased Himself in any other way! Tell the masses that all this is a profound mystery that they must adore and they are perfectly satisfied! Our friend was perfectly at sea when confronted with all these serious difficulties; yet, in the end, he declared that he firmly believes that Jesus Christ was God and that he came to atone for the sins of mankind and that he established his Church and that this is the Catholic Church!

From this a Rationalist will easily see how very difficult it is to argue with people of limited education in whom the logical and critical faculties are undeveloped. Their mind has been so befogged by erroneous teaching that they are incapable of seeing anything clearly. They will trot out their own absurd arguments, little thinking that these are worn-out ones. They imagine, for instance, that when they have urged the necessity of a First Cause they have

used a crushing argument that leaves their opponents dumbfounded!

Every experienced Rationalist must have remarked that the trouble with believers is the rotten education they have received. So long as these people will be educated by priests, there is very little chance of their getting enlightened unless they educate themselves. In the case of our friend he appeared so satisfied with his own education, which he seems to think is a very sound one, that one is not surprised at his complacency regarding the soundness of his own creed. Yet his ignorance is such that he seemed to treat as a huge joke that Science points to no beginning and no end in the universal scheme of things, that our earth exists since millions of years, that the immense antiquity of man and his origin from lowly animal ancestors have

been well established; that our Earth is not the centre of the Universe and God's activities, an idea responsible for most of the religious beliefs of the present day; that the story of Adam and Eve is a myth, and that evolution and not special creation is accepted by most learned people to explain the origin of species. Of his own religion, he knows nothing of its history, the unreliable nature of the Gospels and traditions and the preposterous claims of his Church. He cannot even recognize that his religion is fast dying out and that his Church is fighting a losing battle. For once, I realized the truth that to attempt to enlighten such a person, might, even if successful, rob him of happy illusions and leave him like one who awakes from a most pleasant dream disillusioned!

C. L. D'AVOINE.

Critics point a finger of scorn and assure me that he who persuades man to accept an animal origin encourages him to act the beast. I cannot believe this to be true. The moment we accept our humble lineage, with its mixed and crowded heritage, the better are we armed to deal with all the weakness of the flesh, and the more shall we strive, through the laws of evolution, to attain progress and improvement. Darwin's doctrine is neither degrading nor immoral in its effects.

* * * * *

Knowledge grows and evolves, but is never final. The world is full of strange contradictions; man longs for the stable, the eternal and the unchangeable, and finds in time that the only everlasting thing is change. The law of evolution prevails throughout the universe, and we must accept it.

SIR A. KEITH,
in "Darwinism and what it implies."

BRAHAMANISM.

Manu's Attitude towards Women.

Freedom is absolutely denied to women be it in childhood, youth or old age. They, according to the Law-giver, are practically slaves. They are the property of their fathers who dispose them off in marriage to husbands selected by them. A husband in Brahmanism literally means "owner." And in the following sacred laws of Manu the word "owner" should be understood as husband.

"A wife is to be considered as a non-proprietor. Hence all she earns or receives can be claimed by her owner."

"A woman, whether in childhood, youth or old age, should never act independently; she should always take her orders from her father in her childhood, from her husband when he is living and from her son when she becomes a widow." (V 147/8)

"She should agree to marry that owner who has been selected by her father or brother. She should serve that owner till his death and after that observe celibacy till her death." (V ; 154).

"A woman should never do such acts as are disliked by her owner either during his life time or after his death." (V; 156)

"The donation of a daughter by word is equivalent to transfer of ownership." (V ; 152).

"Even though the owner be of bad character or be devoid of good character the wife should always worship him like a God." (V ; 154).

"A widow should never eat rich food but should eat frugally to keep down her weight and should never think of another man." (V ; 157).

"A good woman is she who never marries another owner in her life." (V ; 162).

"A woman, who goes astray even with the pious thought of begetting a son whose existence is useful to rescue his parents from hell, is, after her death, not allowed to reach the world of owners, but is born a jackal in the next life." (V ; 164).

"A woman, who throughout her life, serves her husband living or dead through control of her mind and body, is sure after her death to obtain the world of owners." (V ; 165)

"When a wife dies, the husband ought to marry another wife soon after the cremation of the dead wife." (V ; 168).

"A woman, who throughout her life serves her husband living or dead through control of her mind without thinking of another man, through control of her speech by not admiring another man's qualifications, and through control of her body without coming into physical contact with another man, is sure, after her death, to attain the world of owners." (V ; 165).

"In a court of law, the evidence of one man is preferable to that of many pious women because women are frail.(VIII; 77)

"A woman does not deserve any freedom." (IX; 93)

"An owner should neither dine in company with his wife nor should look at her when she is yawning or sneezing or dining." (IV; 43)

There are many other instances in which women are treated disgracefully by Manu. To take only one more instance, a woman is never allowed to remarry

even if she becomes a widow in her childhood. Again, if after her husband's death she faithfully observes the rules of widowhood and celibacy, remaining true to her, perhaps, sinful wicked husband, she is sent by Manu to the world of her husband where it is always likely to turn out to be the life of a brute or a devil or at the best of an untouchable, according to XII 9. It is not clearly explained by Manu whether the world of owners is the world of her own husband or of all husbands. In fact, the world of husbands whatever it may be, has been manufactured by the Brahmins for their own selfish motives in contravention of the doctrine of transmigration which they themselves preach.

Manu in the course of chapter IX, deals with the protection of women—here the word protection means keeping watch over the actions of women. "To protect a woman" in Brahmanism means to be jealous of a woman's chastity. Here are a few sacred laws relating to the subject:—

"A Woman is by nature frail, full of sexual desire and devoid of love instincts and consequently she turns out faithless to her husband, in spite of carefully protecting her. (IX ; 15)

"The Creator has planted such nature in womankind, therefore a man should leave no stone unturned to protect her from going astray. (IX ; 16)

"Womankind is inauspicious like untruth." (IX ; 18)

Marriage in Hindu Society.

According to Manu, a woman is from her birth to her marriage, the property of her father and from her marriage till her death the property of her husband, whether he be living or dead. The father is only a trustee and the husband the real

eternal owner. Marriage is a sacrament meant primarily for the benefit of man, and woman, a sort of living property is, so to say, sacrificed in the holy fire of matrimony. A marriage ceremony is the accepting by the husband of a charity of the hand of a maid made by her father.

"Brothers can divide their father's property only once; the charity of the hand of a maid can be made only once; (VIII ; 47)." One should not remarry his daughter.

Though a woman could not remarry, yet widows were allowed to bear children after undergoing the ceremony of Niyoga (special religious adultery rite).

Manu allows men to marry any number of wives at a time, even though the man has to take a vow of fidelity at the time of the ceremony of the marriage. Yet Manu lays down that:—

"If a wife is enraged at the new marriage of a husband and is prepared to leave him, then a husband may, according to his wish, either imprison her in the house or forsake her in the presence of her parents." (IX ; 83).

There are eight kinds of marriages according to Brahmanism.

The Brahama, in which the high-born Hindu is advised to marry his daughter to a Brahmin graduate without the latter's solicitations. This is the ideal kind of marriage, for the father of the bride has no self interest in it. Perhaps the practice of offering a newly-married wife on the first night of marriage to a Vaishnav Maharaj may have risen from this. The second one is the Divine, in which a high born Hindu marries his daughter temporarily to a Brahmin who officiates as the agent of certain Gods at a sacrifice performed by the father. This

marriage is inferior to the Brahama for here the father rewards the Brahmin for the services. The king Romapada married his daughter to a Brahmin Rishya Shring because he thereby expected rainfall in his kingdom. The Arsha, in which the father gets a cow for religious sacrifices. The Prajapatya, in which the father expects happiness and religious life for his daughter. The Gandharva, in which the couple marry each other to satisfy their love. The sixth, in which the maid is kidnapped or forcibly taken away even by murdering her relatives. The seventh, in which the daughter is given in exchange for some money and the last in which rape is perpetrated. The first six kinds of marriage are good for the Brahmins, the last four for the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Sudhras. The marriage by kidnapping is the best form for Kshatriyas and marriage by exchange for Vaishyas and Sudhras. The marriage in which the money is paid to the bride's father is strictly prohibited to the Brahmins. A Brahmin can marry a girl of any caste by following any forms of marriage.

"A son born of a Vaishya mother and a Brahmin father belongs to the Ambasta caste; a son of a Shudrah mother and a Brahmin father belongs to a Nishada caste." (X; 8)

"The son of a Vaishya mother and a Shudrah father belongs to Ayogaya caste; and that of a Kshatriya mother and a Shudrah father belongs to Kshatta caste; that of a Brahmin mother and a Shudrah father belongs to the untouchable caste." (X; 12).

"The son a Shudrah mother and a Kshatriya father belongs to an Ugra caste." (X; 9).

"The son of an Ugra mother and a Brahmin father belongs to an Avritta

caste; that of an Ambasta mother and a Brahmin father to the Abhira caste; that of an Ayogava mother and a Brahmin father to the Dhigvan caste." (X; 15).

"The son a Brahmin mother and a Vaishya father belongs to a Vaideha caste." (X; 13).

"The son of a Brahmin mother and a Kshatriya father belongs to the Suta caste." (X; 17).

"The son born of a Vaideha mother and a Nishad father belong to Karavar caste. (X; 36).

"The Suta caste should do the trade of horsekeeping; the Ambashta caste should do the trade of surgery; the Nishada caste should do the fishing trade; the Ayogava caste should do the trade of carpentry etc." (X; 47-48).

"The untouchables (Chandalas and Shvapachas) should live outside a village; their vessels are never to be used by the other castes even after purifying them by heating; they should dine in broken vessels (thrown away by the villagers); they should wear ornaments made of iron only; a religious person of a higher caste should shun looking at their faces; they should not intermarry and should deal only among themselves; none should give them food personally but only through low-born servants; they should not remain in villages or towns at night; at day time they should do scavenging work. (X 51-56).

There are so many complications in this web of inter-caste marriage and the various castes resulting therefrom, that I refrain from giving more examples. It may be noted that the "untouchable" caste that consists at present of millions of men and women has descended directly

from the Brahmin women. The Brahmins were so furious with their women who dared to marry the Shudras, that they punished them by boycotting their children.

The idea of vicarious punishment is not foreign to Manu. For example, he lays down that one, who gives false evidence, in a Court of Law, in the matter of cattle, is responsible for casting one's five forefathers into hell; ten forefathers in the matter of cows; one hundred forefathers in the matter of horses and one thousand forefathers in the matter of men." (VIII 98). Thus, if one gives false evidence in the matter of men, ones' forefathers numbering one thousand go into hell. We may question Manu, what of those forefathers, who, in virtue of their religious deeds such as giving

dinners and donations to the Brahmins incessantly, have gone to Heaven or who have been born in the community of gods according to (XII 9)? Should they forego the life of a god or forsake Heaven, merely because one of their descendents, born after thousands of years, happens to give false evidence? Manu, who teaches the doctrine of Transmigration, must have been either too foolish or too cunning to give such absurd punishment to any one for giving false evidence.

In conclusion, one may say that Manu devised everything for the benefit of the Brahmin. All had to bow before him. All had to work and die for him. In fact Manu made him a God on earth, a lazy God at that.

HINDU.

"It is natural for men to seek to improve their position, and the Sudras of India, to whom Hinduism in the past and in the present has been so cruel, have struggled hard to improve their status by accepting Buddhism or Vaishnavism or Islamism or anything else which has offered them a chance. All these religions have secured most of their converts from the Sudra castes of India. Hinduism with all its noble traditions, its rich moral lessons, and its ancient wealth of philosophy and deep thought, has continuously suffered in the past by its exclusive caste-system. In the future, a catholic and all embracing love and a brotherly recognition of equality may re-unite and save, all uncharitable exclusiveness will disunite and destroy."

R. C. DUTT.

Heresy is the last and best thought. It is the perpetual New World, the unknown sea, towards which the brave sail. It is the eternal horizon of progress.

INGERSOLL.

Who never doubted never half believed,
Where doubt there truth is—'tis her shadow.

BATLEY.

WHAT THE RATIONALIST KNOWS.

Rationalism does not falter in its task even at the risk of raising a storm. The distinction between agnosticism and atheism is not, in any sense, classical. The term "agnostic" is of recent invention, due to mid-Victorian hypocrisy. Under the cover of an euphuistic appellation the doubters who receded from the Church thought they could more safely retain their respectable position than if they openly paraded their atheistic convictions. It was the product of that transitory age which under altered conditions obviated the continuance of the cloak. The greater the freedom with which one may give expression to his true belief, the less becomes the need for equivocation and all those artifices meant for preserving the status without adhering to the established forms of faith. And thanks to the pioneers of Rationalism who have purchased for us with their lives and liberty the freedom that we today enjoy to express unstintingly our disbelief.

If Rationalism is to proceed from true knowledge, it does not suffice to serve as an ideal to have the motto "I do not know." That would be an ideal resting on ignorance, not more enlightened if accompanied by philosophical serenity. Further, as Rationalism is founded on science, and united knowledge, the unravelling of the truths of life is the subject of all scientific pursuit. Hence the comfortable cradle of slumbering ignorance, now complacently patronising the "village atheist" and then assuming greater respectability by coquetting with theism, swinging awkwardly between heresy and orthodoxy, cannot faithfully harbour real Rationalism, which is an attitude which acknowledges, that so far as human activity

may go, Reason and Reason alone is the one safe and true guide. A mistake is not infrequently made that the Rationalist does not give due weight to the fact that human reason is imperfect, after all its achievements in science and elsewhere. The Rationalist need not be reminded that "there are things other than reason on which many of our beliefs are based." Human belief, in fact, is mostly based upon the want of reason. It is the endeavour of reason to analyse such beliefs and give them the hall-mark of validity. If our beliefs have to be based upon "things other than reason" we shall to that extent be excluding the possibility of the only test that humanity has so far been able to discover. While recognising that reason has its limitations one has to acknowledge that to the present day no more perfect implement has been forged that may yield results more satisfactory than the touchstone of human reason.

Some remarks of Mr. V. Pittie on Rationalism (Reason May, 1932, pp 30, 32) are interesting reading. Belief in the existence of a God is akin to the belief in one's own existence. Both are based on intuition and nothing more. Our contributor perhaps does not see any great difference between the two beliefs. Apart from intuition, does not a scratch "irritate beyond measure" his tender skin, and prove beyond doubt his existence? Reason there may have been none for his existence as there is none for the existence of many quite different things. But the fallacy of the whole reasoning lies here, viz. that it is the theist who, in his anxiety to derive everything from a first cause, seeks to assign reasons for his own as well as his god's

existence. The mere seeker after truth, the Rationalist, is on the other hand wedded to no particular article of faith, and is not bound to explain away all existences somehow or other tracing out great first causes least understood. In the saucepan of his outburst one is inclined to add a pinch of salt. "Anyway," he wrote, "it would be undisputably truer to say that the world can get on very well without the Rationalist than to say that it could get on as well without God." And then, why did not the world get on without the Rationalist? And if the answer is that it did get on without him and his rich sacrifice of life and liberty, one has only to conclude that a very thick veil shrouds the historical vision of those that venture forth such a reply. By the very essence of its nature, human reason is probing into the mysteries of primitive animal instincts elevated to the dignity of "intuition." Reason is slowly but steadily perfecting a blind dark craving into the light of conscious and well-conceived ideals. Very truly, 'it may not become necessary to reject what one cannot comprehend' but a systematic application of the scientific method is slowly bringing into our comprehension what, in the infancy of the race and in the minds of particular sections of humanity even today, remained a mystical experience.

The evidence of sages and philosophers is triumphantly tendered in support of the belief in God. Their respectability places the genuineness of their belief beyond question. But belief is not synonymous with the truth or validity of such a belief. That would, in its turn, depend upon the competency of the witness to speak concerning the subject of his evidence. If a theologian, as such, is not

competent to pronounce upon the adequacy of an engineering measure e.g., the construction of a bridge or a dam, it is contrary to reason to expect an engineer or other specialist to pronounce upon the veracity of theological doctrine. Those that have studied phenomena, classified them, and evolved the laws of their working are alone competent to give opinion in any field, be it scientific, sociological, religious or any other. And if the scientific method is not excluded from other fields, there is little reason why its application should be barred to the investigation of one of the most intimate of human problems, viz. the existence of god. In fact, the most confirmed "intuitionists" cannot help bringing themselves within the jurisdiction of Rationalism. They seek to reason out the existence of god, just as much as anybody would try to prove the veracity of a geometrical theorem. And when the nature of their task leads them naturally to an unsatisfactory conclusion, it is the fashionable thing to lift up both hands to heaven and shout "Intuition".

Much of the difficulty is also caused in the beginning by not having definite notions regarding the object of pursuit. In the art of shifting connotation, there is not another word in human vocabulary beside GOD. What it meant to our ancestors, what it meant to the savage and what it means to the majority that employ the expression, it will require a library to record. To the fetish-worshippers' symbol of god the theist turns his back. The idols of wood and stone that were, and in some places are still gods, have ceased to harbour more enlightened divinity. In the mountain, the lake, and the river, the cow, and the snake, the sun, the earth, and the moon, is a relegated godhead. An abstract formulation of

natural forces has evolved a subtler home for the Divine In-Dweller. Hunted from pillar to post, the god-idea rests at point in the theists' mind as providence with the attributes of design and personality. Natural force devoid of the personal element would be scarcely worthy of human attention, and a universe without design would be inexplicable and derogatory to the greatness of the First Cause. Unless the personality of Providence is benignant, human allegiance would become the object of tyranny. Hence, the effort at evolving a moral order in the universe out of a designing, personal providence, viz., God, the father of man, all-loving, all-knowing, all-perfect.

If that is the content of theistic belief, as no other form of faith exhibits the essentials of the god-doctrine more in the abstract, the Rationalist knows that God in that sense does not exist. To him Rationalism is synonymous with Atheism. He has scanned the diverse creeds erected by man all throughout history, compared them, classified their experiences as he classified the stones and bones that he could gather in the buried strata of the earth, and formulated laws for their working as precisely fitting with the facts as any law of nature hitherto discovered. Religious history, the record of human faith is no exception to scientific treatment. There never was

and never there can be a 'divine revelation. "The select few" is a dangerous and a presumptuous doctrine. Human toil perfected human talent as much as physical industry added by the same reasoning faculty perfected his original flint implements. The Rationalist further knows that in the building up of the religious dogma, fear, credulity, exploitation and a host of other human weaknesses have entered. Our faiths of the past, instead of having been built upon the bedrock of truth, were fashioned from time to time upon the exigencies of time and the advantages of particular generations and classes of men. Their universal application is therefore impracticable, if not injurious or even totally impossible. The cults of the world disclose by their weaknesses, their humble and quite human origins instead of the descent from heaven of which the least is in evidence. At any stage the attempt to palm off a human product as the gift of God is patent. The Rationalist knows that along with the failure in nature, its experiments, and deaths, its cruelties, and sufferings, the content of human belief has been toiling long and wearily to plumb its deaths of darkness and ignorance along the only safe course known to man, the line of reason.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

FALLACIOUS REASONING.

Since "REASON" is an organ which expresses the views of Rationalists on questions of beliefs, one wonders whether Mr. V. Pittie's article, under the caption of "Rationalism" in last month's issue of "Reason" was inserted inadvertently or merely to give us, Rationalists, an object lesson of how some people can be muddled in their thoughts while believing that they are clear thinkers and reasoners.

On reading his undisguised tirade against Rationalism, one is really at a loss to understand what Mr. Pittie is driving at. His remarks about "a fanatic (sic) belief in atheism" which he thinks "is the fashionable thing among Rationalists in these days"; his contemptions sneer at the "Village atheist" who has an unshakable belief in the non-existence of God, etc are really too ridiculous for serious comment. Since the expression "Village atheist" has been coined by those superior persons who affect to think that any one who criticises religious beliefs and ideas is a shallow presumptuous and foolish person whose proper place is the village green and not where learned people assemble, the use of such an expression to belittle anti-religious thinkers is a stock in trade of preachers and other defenders of the faith. So Mr. Pittie also uses this expression which perchance he may have heard some thoughtless persons use. It is a pity, however, that he has not read a defence of "The Village Atheist" by that famous writer E. Haldeman-Julius, for as that writer says a thinker in a village need not be inferior

to one in a city. Mr. Pittie seems to have some curious ideas about the way Rationalists think. All one can do here is to assure him that no sensible Rationalist argues in the manner Mr. Pittie thinks he does. No sensible Rationalist would denounce him as a theist because his belief is based on things most congenial to him rather than on logical and rational arguments. It also follows that no sensible Rationalist would compel him to accept the view that happens to be in fashion with Rationalists. Rationalists are not concerned with beliefs that do not satisfy our reason, and people who think that "there are other things than reason on which many of our beliefs have to be based" have no right to the title of Rationalists, and there the matter ends so far as a sensible Rationalist is concerned.

We all know that the question of the existence of God is one that has interested the best brains in the world, but surely a Rationalist has a right to say why he cannot accept an opinion which does not satisfy his intellect. If he is to be bewildered by contradictory views on any subject and not appeal to his reason as an arbiter of the question such a person cannot by any means be called a Rationalist. Mr. Pittie seems to be yet in this stage. The best advice an experienced Rationalist can give him is to study properly the philosophy of Rationalism before prematurely rushing to criticise it.

PROTONIUS.

[We allowed Mr. Pittie's article to appear precisely, as our correspondant rightly suspects, to show the confusion that still exists in the minds of many people regarding the philosophy of Rationalism. In publishing the articles of correspondents we do not necessarily agree with their views.

Ed. REASON.]

THROUGH CHRISTIAN SPECTACLES.

"When found, make a note of."—*Captain Cuttle.*

"Humanity thinks slowly,"—*C. R. W. Nevinson.*

"We need to have more respect for the thinkers."—*Dr Norwood.*

"What fools these mortals be."—*Shakespeare.*

The small but ferocious tribe of Christian Evidence exponents have a new and somewhat unexpected ally in Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson, M.P., for the Handsworth Division of Birmingham, who has published a lengthy article in the *Evening News*, (London), April 15, dealing with Religion in Parliament. But the Commander wears his rue with a difference. Like that placid dachshund which Mark Twain saw in the possession of a sportsman who was taking it out to hunt elephants, he lacks bitterness. He also lacks some other things—the ability to murder the English language, the power of talking very loudly in the open air, and accuracy.

Nevertheless, I find myself in a rebellious humour. For there is a schoolboy tone in the Commander's propaganda, and a note of patronage. There is also an echo of the ridiculous Oxford University manner, which has been described, jocosely, as the attitude of the Christian Trinity addressing a lodging-house bug. It will probably be grateful to those sentimentalists who cling to the name of Christian, but I imagine it will irritate rather than satisfy other readers of more virile intelligence.

Commander Locker-Lampson is really upset at the mere suggestion that there is less religion to-day than a generation earlier. He is so incensed that his blood pressure is affected, and his sense of vision has become impaired. To-day,

the Commander asserts, there is more sincerity and less cant, and the present House of Commons contains more practising Christians than in the awful days of horse-buses, "growlers," and Queen Victoria. I don't know why he selects the House of Commons for his illustration, for he might as well have selected the Grand Stand at Newmarket. However, he points out, with tears in his pen, that he has known four politicians in twenty years who have more or less regularly attended a church, chapel, or tin-tabernacle. Remembering that there are about 700 Members of Parliament, four is not an overwhelming number, and even if the Commander counts himself in, the grand total is still only five. What a revelation! Dartmoor, Borstal, and Wormwood Scrubbs can show a better record than that, and the inhabitants may be as good men as politicians.

The Commander paints a truly awful picture of fifty years ago. Those dreadful days were, it seems, worse than the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, worse than Southend-on-Sea on a Sunday in the summer-time. He was himself but a child, but he must have had a strong constitution to stand it all. Hardened veteran that I am, I blush to record some of the horrors. In that period of wickedness John Morley actually printed the name "God," with a little "g." In a hall in the Midlands, Charles Bradlaugh (so the Commander says) stood with a watch in his hand, and gave "God" sixty seconds to strike him dead. And the daring Atheist actually chuckled when he returned that watch to his pocket. It was "too deep for tears." Compared to this awful period the Great War was but a football scrimmage. The only reason that the world was not entirely wiped

out by an incensed, outraged deity was due, probably, to the fact that Mr. Gladstone attended a place of worship, and his opponent, Disraeli, occasionally snoozed in his pew. That watch ought to be in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's.

Commander Locker-Lampson is not the first distinguished man who knows his own job, but outside it is just a breezy, happy-go-lucky schoolboy. But he should not carry this Peter Pan business into middle-age, for he might find himself in Colney Hatch instead of the House of Commons, which would be a sad end for so earnest a crusader. The Commander hasn't got a good word for Freethinkers. He suggests that the fault of those dreadful people, or rather their misfortune, for they are born that way, is that they lack the religious sense:—

Even as you might stand before a picture of Michael Angelo and dismiss it as a sickening daub, when to the sensitive soul it is a miracle of truth, beyond analysis.

He is quite sorry for the poor demented Freethinkers, and in the heat of the argument, a little confused and more than a little silly. Commander Locker-Lampson is not the first sailor who has "seen things." He is obsessed with a great illusion. Christians have no monopoly of æsthetics or the finer feelings. It is doubtful if the average hymn of to-day has any more claim to be considered as real literature than the usual music-hall song. And the very glaring lurid lithographs of sacred subject framed in so many Christian homes suggest that colour-blindness is not by any means confined to the heterodox.

As a defender of the faith, the Commander is not an outstanding success. He points to the wireless as a proof that religion is not dead to-day. I cheerfully concede the point, but it is not proved by relaying cacophonous Negro *spirituals* in a Sunday programme, or by a Jesuit priest mouthing nonsense from Mayfair. The question is how many persons listen to the pious propaganda, and how many

prefer listening to Continental stations. Our sailor-crusader will have it that the present generation is basically more moral than its Victorian predecessor, and instance national sobriety. But the two factors that have arrested drunkenness have nothing to do with religion. They are the counter attractions of the cinema, and the high price of beer, particularly the latter. Both are purely secular and not religious processes.

The Commander is not so child-like and bland as he appears to be. Counting noses in the House of Commons may be fun for a sailor ashore, but what of the House of Lords? The Church of England has a score of direct religious representatives in this Upper Chamber, and the votes of these lawn-sleeved ecclesiastics shows quite clearly the ethical value of religion, and how far removed from present-day ideals is this Church of Christ. Bishops opposed free education, and voted against admitting women as members of London Borough Councils. They voted against admitting Nonconformists to University degrees, and against removing the civil disabilities of Roman Catholics, Jews, and Freethinkers. None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, beating women in prison, and the use of the lash in the Army and Navy. They even opposed the provision of seats for tired shop-assistants. Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working class have been opposed by these Fathers-in-God, and the pages of Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates" prove the unending hostility of even distinguished Christians to all forms of progress. When a schoolboy said that "Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred porcupines," the master shouted "Think, boy, Think!" The advice should be given to the gallant but emotional commander. There are so many things not dreamt of in his nautical brand of religiosity which is funny without being vulgar.

MIMNERMUS,
in "Freethinker"

SECTARIANISM IN EDUCATION.

Its evil effects on National Life.

In the Sunday Chronicle (Bombay) of the 8th May last there appeared a remarkable article by Prof. Jawla Prasad M. A. Ph. D. (Cantab) on the evil effects of Sectarianism in Education. It is interesting to note that experienced educationists as Dr. R. P. Paranjape (see his "The Crux of Indian Problem") and Dr. Jawla Prasad condemn without hesitation the evils of Sectarianism in India. Both these able men think that the Missionary Schools in particular, in India, foster these evils to a great extent and their activities should not be encouraged. We hold exactly the same view and probably most people who have given a thoughtful consideration to the question may come to the same conclusion. The late Viceroy Lord Irwin and some Anglo-Indian papers, however, think differently. Lord Irwin, who is well known to be a very pious Christian, praises the Missionary Schools in India in a manner to be expected from a pious Christian. Yet as Dr. Jawla Prasad clearly shows Sectarianism in Education is a great evil in India. The atmosphere of a sectarian institution poisons at the outset the vital springs of life. He rightly thinks that the communal problem in India cannot be solved directly or indirectly so long as there are educational institutions in this country which foster the communal bias in education.

"The aim of education," says Dr. Jawla Prasad, "is not an acquirement of knowledge in the sense of a mere taking in of all that is to be said by teachers or authors of books, but an impartial and critical examination of their opinions and an unprejudiced advancement of knowledge. It will appear, (Dr. Prasad shows this in the course of his long article) that all denominational institutions are by their very nature, and for other obvious reasons, disqualified to accomplish this end. If they owe loyalty to the particular class or creed which they represent and to which they owe their existence, they must *ipso facto* be false

to the ideals of sound education. Do we not find that the first concern of the majority of teachers and students of a denominational institution is to persuade themselves and others to believe in the dogmas of the particular faith which they have been taught to profess, and to defend them, however absurd they might be, against the attacks of others. History has sufficient data to convince that religion, in the ordinary and accepted sense of the term, has been no friend of those who have stood for the advancement of scientific knowledge. "The other alternative open to the members of a denominational institution, and an alternative which is certainly becoming more popular with them, is to feign a lukewarm loyalty to both the sectarian aims and objects of the institution and the ideal of the pursuit of knowledge. These people naturally fall between two stools in their effort of doing so, and, in course of time, unknown to themselves, they end with developing the character of a hypocrite both from the educational and the religious point of view."

Dr. Jawla Prasad may not be quite correct here as far as some well-known religious educational institutions very popular with many, are concerned. In these institutions, whose only aim at education is to deepen the faith of their alumni in the particular creed they profess, scientific views which are believed to uphold the faith are taught. So much for wrong knowledge imparted. From a pure communalistic point of view, students are encouraged to keep aloof from those who do not belong to their faith. When one says that this sort of spirit is worse in Roman Catholic institutions one has only stated what is common knowledge among those who have studied the educational methods of Roman Catholic teachers carefully.

A. VICTOR.

THE WAILINGS OFF A PARSI YOUTH.

To,

The Editor, the "Reason,"

Dear Sir,

BOMBAY.

I have read with genuine gratification your able article under the caption of "the attitude of believers towards unbelievers" in the last issue of "Reason". As it contains a very able, candid and considered criticism of my community, especially of the Parsi educated youths, I take this opportunity of endorsing every word that you have written so far as it concerns the Parsi youth of today.

Sir, it is simply a myth to say that the Parsis are educated. (!) Far from it. They may have some pseudo-educational qualifications of an University but in free rational thinking on religious or social subjects they are worst than any other uneducated communalist. No one will have to go far in search of facts for this statement, for the result of the election of the Parsi Panchyat Committee held a couple of months back is sufficient proof if there be needed any. The orthodox supported by communalist daily papers raised an age-old cry of "religion in danger" and I am extremely grieved and ashamed to say that, even our so-called educated section of the community fell a victim to this mischievous propaganda and voted solidly for the orthodox candidates, believing that Rationalists—to them known as "*masanias*", "*cheerutyas*" etc. etc.—will uproot the Zoroastrian religion and its doctrines. We were even accused of having an aim of converting our "Atash-behrams" into "dancing halls," and our "Towers of Silence" into "Crematoriums". And all these malicious stories purposely broadcasted for propaganda purposes by a section of my community

were believed by our so-called educated boys and girls. Yes, it is rather due to a solid orthodox block maintained by our so-called educated and cultured (!) girls that our community is so backward in any rational reforms. Our Parsi educated girls excell *per excelsis* in orthodoxy and even beat every other uneducated Indian girl in India. She still prefers to be an "*antyanj*" every month at the time of her monthly sickness and plays a part of the "Untouchable" during that period. She still visits a Brahmin "Joshi" to get a reading of her "*Tapkas*" and "*Janmotries*". Nay she would not even think of marrying, in spite of her passing off as a cultured and romancing girl, unless and until her favourite "Joothabbhai Joshi" assures her that her would-be hubby possesses "Dev Goon". Woe be for a Parsi boy if he is of "Mangal" (Mars) or of "Rakshashi Goon." Then he cannot get a girl in the ordinary course. He must wait till the right type comes up for him and that may be at any time; perhaps where he is 50 years old.

But this is not all. On our birthday, we Parsi Youths are harassed by our priest-ridden orthodox mothers and sisters more than even on the day of our marriage. We are made to get up as early as possible, are asked to bathe ourselves with 'Cow's urine,' at times mixed with "milk," then made to stand on a pulpit, garlanded with flowers and asked to carry a cocoanut in our hands, made to eat "milk-Curds and Sugar lumps" then marked with "Cunkum and rice" on the

forehead followed with blessings for a long life and riches and what not but with one strict order, and that is that we must get down from the pulpit with the right foot first. Where goes the education when the Parsi youths quietly submit to all these age old *fatwas* even in these days of education and reforms?

Still further, let there be an anniversary of a deceased family member and woe be to us living youths. From early morning the whole house is topsy-turvy. Strict orders are issued to us not to touch anything or we might pollute sacred utensils for the ceremony. In fact we cannot touch our women as they become

specially "*Pak*" (sacred) by a special bath for that occasion. Besides, on that day everything must be used after washing in well water; yet it has never occurred to educated (!) dames that they are always using the milk, the ghee, the sandal wood etc. as they come along, namely, all polluted by "*Durvands*" i.e. from the hands of other castes. Sir, I do not want to trouble your readers with our further wailings. We alone know the life that we pass at home. The least said the better.

Yours etc.,

A disgusted Parsi Youth.

THE PAST OF ZORASTRIANISM IN PERSIA.

In the past, says G.K.N., Zoroastrianism made itself intolerable to the masses as the Moheds, who were the pillars of the Sasanian Empire, encouraged the Princess to make war and to oppress the people greatly. Though it is customary to blame Islamism for fanatical doings in Persia,, especially towards the Zoroastrians, yet G. K. N. thinks that it is now well established among scholars that Islamism, in the beginning of its career actually did a lot of good to that country. He mentions the greater liberty of women under Islamism contrasted with what they were under Zoroastrianism as an instance in point. In the end he makes the following fervent appeal to the authorities not to encourage

the Parsi bigots in Persia :—

"I have directly to appeal to you to take steps not to encourage religion-maniacs among the Parsis who are stimulated to cherish the fanatic hope that by coming to closer relations with Persia, such as I have been endeavouring to establish, they will have the joy of their life and the revival of Zoroastrianism in Persia, such as is practised to-day in India with its abominable tenets of exposure to the birds of prey, the consumption of bull's urine as a religious rite and other customs which are rightly held as execrable by the enlightened Parsis, who however, like our friend Arab Kaikhusro Shahrokh, are unable to voice their views in public on account of the frenzied bigots."

AN OUT SPOKEN AND COURAGEOUS ADDRESS.

It would appear that there is a movement afoot to establish closer trade relations between India and Persia and that some of the Parsees of Bombay are very interested in this movement. As it is believed that these Parsees also aim at reviving Zoroastrianism in Persia, G.K.N. the well known Parsee Rationalist of Bombay, has addressed a spirited and courageous communication to "One of the highest authorities in Persia in which he points out the baneful effects that would accrue if such an archaic and intolerant creed was encouraged in a land where the present enlightened Ruler is, it appears, doing his best to combat fanaticism. After complaining that all sort of difficulties are put in his way for drawing attention to this attempt of introducing religion in Persia by some designing people in Bombay, G. K. N. writing in the Sunday Advocate of April 24th last, says:—

"A greater obstacle to my activities in the interest of Persia began unhappily to operate some years ago. I may at once respectfully submit that I believe that religions have, in the totality of their effect, done more harm than good to the poor humanity. I was, therefore, painfully surprised to find that people pretending to be encouraged in certain influential quarters in Persia, have been importing the element of religion into their campaign of reunion of Persia and Iran. There is no denying that there is a section among the Musalman Persians who desire a closer union on the part of Parsis with Persia. Their activities are wholly laudable and have so far been warmly supported by me. But most unfortunately, a section of the Persian group has made, what I may call, a kind of unholy alliance with some of the rich Parsis who happen

also to be very fanatic, about their religion of Zoroaster. The Parsis are told that their religion is not only highly appreciated in Persia but that high Government officials are only looking forward for a suitable opportunity to adopt Zoroastrianism! They are encouraged in spending large sums in propagating translation of certain Avesta texts, which all western scholars and the advanced Parsi learned have declared to be of a very late date and in portions contradictory to the doctrine of Zoroaster. They have moreover, launched attacks directly against Bahaism and indirectly against Islam by denunciation of the Arab culture. There may be two opinions regarding the results of the contact of the Arabs with Persia in ancient times. But there is no question that Persia had suffered grievously. But you will also allow me to state that the harm that the Arabs inflicted has ceased to operate for a long time now. And yet some of the Persians and fanatic Parsis think of revenge and cherish projects of turning the tables upon the Arabs. We know how the European nations fought amongst each other not quite fifteen years ago; we know how, England and Germany, for instance, flew at each other's throat; and we know how they forgot their feuds and are extending each the hand of friendship to the other. But the clique of the hypocritical Persians and the religion-mad Parsis I refer to above are constantly vituperating the Arabs and forgetting that you, who have promulgated laws of perfect equality amongst all Irani Nationals, have a large number of subjects who are of Arab origin, especially in Khuzistan, who still speak the Arabic language and to whom the various references in the literature which these Persians and Parsis propagate must be unnecessarily and gratuitously offensive."

AT THE SECRETARY'S TABLE.

Finances of the Association.

In pursuance of the resolution passed at the annual general meeting, the committee considered ways and means of collecting sufficient funds to finance the activities of the Association. If we should carry out our programme in toto, it will cost us at least Rs. 2000/- for this year. It was resolved to make an appeal to the members to make further monthly contributions, according to their means. Five gentlemen have already promised to contribute Rupees Ten per month for this year. We should be very happy if all our members could contribute towards the Association. In spite of laying ourselves open to the charge of repetition, we beg to remind our members that a greater sacrifice is always called for from all pioneers in every movement. There can be no two opinions on the usefulness of our Association, and therefore we should not let it go under. An easy way of sending this contribution would be by asking us to send you copies of "Reason" per V.P. P. Should you desire to do so, kindly fill in the enclosed card and post it to us.

The programme.

During this year, the committee has resolved to continue the publication of "Reason" as a monthly. To increase its usefulness, it has been decided to send it to all the important libraries over the whole of India. A second activity is to publish tracts dealing with the three religions of India, and to distribute them broadcast. A small sub-committee has been appointed to arrange for the writing out of these

tracts. It has also been decided once again to start a series of lectures, and we shall be very happy to learn from members and their friends, who would be willing to deliver any.

The Children's News.

We have received a copy of this monthly edited by Aruna Asafali and R. Raman and published at Egerton Road, Delhi. The annual subscription is Rs. -2/8/-. The journal consists of short stories, lives of great men, information on social movements of interest to children, letters to young folks etc. The journal is well edited and will, we feel certain, be read with interest by children in all Indian homes.

Library.

Mr. A. P. Da Costa has presented the following books to the library:— Conflict between Religion and Science by Draper; Darwinism and what it Implies, Keith; Concerning Man's Origin, Keith; Materialism restated, Cohen; The Ruins, Volney; Omar Khayyam, and Life of Lenin. Lt. Col. Sanjana has presented us with a copy of "What is man" by Mark Twain.

New Members.

The following have joined our Association—

Miss Mary J. F. Wadia, Lt. R. M. Billimoria, Dr. Miss Gladys H. Marchant, M.D., F.R.C.S., J. R. Labelle, Ch. Abdul Gani, D. S. Tanavde, Ram Gopal, Bar-at-Law, K. N. Dorle, Chandrabhai K. Bhat.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

No. 7]

July, 1932.

[Monthly ;

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

While discussing the functions of the Rationalist Association, one often comes across the question "But what are you going to substitute for what you destroy?" Those who ask this question argue that religion, be it in its higher or superstitious form, has so far played an important part in human life

and has moulded human values to a remarkable extent. If, therefore, you do not replace theology by some other kind of philosophy the world will go to rack and ruin. The answer to this is simple. Religion and its adjuvant, superstition, have existed because of a high proportion of ignorance. Both of these have been the result of search for knowledge and

are only stages on the road. If nothing more could be added to the material on which they are based and if consequently the inferences that are drawn from them were final, then no Rationalist Association would have ever appeared. Unfortunately that is the standpoint of religious teachers for whom the views they expound are both full and final. But because it is not so Rationalist Societies have grown all over the surface of the world. It is true that Rationalism did not spread for centuries, but it was so because the clergy could oppose it. However, with the introduction of the printing press and faster modes of travel, the controlling task was not any more as easy. The further search for knowledge has exposed the fallacies of the old beliefs. New facts, fresh experiments, and careful observations do not leave any one a choice especially if one has a desire to be unbiassed and open-minded. Destruction has not been the aim of modern Science. Its one aim has been to construct. With the erection of the new hygienic buildings on more solid, wider and better-prepared foundations, the old caves and huts have been deserted. These may have been servicable once, but they have had their day. Today we have a new address and we intend living there till we find something better. The aim of the Rationalist Association is to advertise this new house, invite people into it and show them round. Such as still prefer their old places which they say were good enough for their ancestors and must be good enough for them, such are albino-type and cannot bear the light, will go back to their old homes; the former happy, because they are true to their ancestors and the latter to die from that wasting disease, pthisis of the mind. Others will choose to remain and be glad that the labour of here-

tics, "foolish scientists" and "damned" atheists has opened up a new world for them, a world in which malicious devils and avenging deities do not exist, a world in which love and not fear is the guiding spirit. Their hymn of praise will naturally be then one of thanksgiving to those that have worked for the freedom of thought.

Because we have all been accustomed to link religion with a sense of right and wrong, one fears lest the wiping out of religion might mean the sweeping out of these ideals as well. But a study of the origin of morals will indicate that our morality is based on social ethics and not on heavenly whims. To prove that one need not be religious to be moral, even in the conventional sense, one has only to look around and examples will be plenty. It is said that though the educated person may not need the restraining hand of an avenging deity, the man in the street will traverse the right path only so long as he is conscious of a god sitting on the top of the world. This is true, but in no way discouraging. It only shows that there is still a wide field to be covered and points to the great need of an all round and better education. When religion and superstition die, they will die of disuse and nobody will ever regret their passing away.

* * *

Though I have been wanting to write on this for some time, I
Wild Views could not do so as the case
on Sex. was still sub-judice. But recently the High Court has rejected the revision application of Mr. Karve. The main reason why Mr. Karve was convicted in the lower court seems to be because he held wild views on sex, wild, because they surpassed even those of Bertrand Russel and Norman

Haire, though in reality they are not so. But to convict a person because his views are more advanced than those of the other recognised thinkers is certainly not reasonable. If that is so, books by Russel and Haire should suffer the same fate as the article by Mr. Karve, as the views of the former two gentlemen astound many a modern man and woman. This proscription should be done early as Russel's "Marriage and Morals" has been one of the best sellers among the youth of this country. Another point to consider is to what extent should a magisterial judgement on a social subject influence our own views. I say no more than the views of any other individual. The reason is plain. The magistrate can only judge from his own view-point and with his own bias which no one can completely eradicate. Though the members of the bench are all styled learned, yet by no chance are they all learned, and certainly not in everything over which they pronounce judgements. Again they can only administer the law and that law may be antiquated. At the moment we are still toiling under some such laws and so long as our legislators are too busy with other affairs, the learned judges have very little latitude. Therefore, one does not feel to sympathise with Mr. Karve on his conviction. The greater loss is to society.

But are these views on sex wild and if so are they dangerous? One of the pet theories that is not yet sufficiently challenged is that sex and indulgence in sex is sinful. It is by no means rare to meet cultured men and women who hold such views, though some of them are liberal enough to allow a generous dose of flirtation. I am leaving out of count another group to whom sex is something horrible, the spinster attitude: these need psycho-analysis. There are others who condemn

sex as dirty, probably because of the anatomical relations. They concentrate their mind entirely on the physical act rather than on the whole chapter of emotional eroticism associated with it. One cannot deny that devoid of eroticism and psychic satisfaction there would be nothing pleasant in sexual experiences. To this group sex will always remain dirty, until man and woman is constructed differently. Till a few years ago, unless luck was with you, an illegitimate child was the inevitable result of frivolity. There was then undoubtedly need to be doubly strict about it and fear of public opprobrium and eternal punishment were the two best restraining influences. But today with the advance in the knowledge of contraceptives there is no justification for such an attitude. Hunger for food and sex are the two dominant urges in the human body. Man has controlled both but has given a greater latitude to hunger for food. Sex having been considered sinful has so far been ruthlessly suppressed or been admitted by the backdoor. Though all do not go so far, yet there is a strong consensus of opinion in support of the views of Freud who gives sex a very important part in human life. The main reason for marital fidelity has been the determination of parentage in those societies where paternal property is distributed among the children. In those societies where the matriarchal system is followed, the mother has as many husbands as she chooses and there is no question of marital fidelity. Man in his selfishness has put a special premium on faithfulness on the part of the wife because he has not been anxious to toil for children that are not his. Similarly with virginity. Woman has made a virtue of chastity and put a price on virginity to please man and that too perhaps the sadistic tendency in

the virile man. That desire to be the first on the scene, though it has led to great things, is certainly irrational so far as emotion and sex is concerned, because the first may not be the best either in intensity or in respect of other qualities. Sex without children, then, becomes entirely the personal affair of two individuals. It does not affect a third person nor society in general. Then why should modern society point its finger at it? Whatever might be said in public, either from the platform or through the press, it cannot be denied that given the opportunity, safety and secrecy most men and women are not averse to an occasional excursion in the domains of sex. This is so all over the world. It has been so for all time; only now the modern contraceptive methods, the automobiles, the hotels and the emancipation of woman have thrown open the opportunities to many more. Birth control has been rightly acclaimed as the greatest discovery ranking next only to fire. It has made possible to many needy ones the satisfaction of a strong urge, which satisfaction has enabled them to carry out their daily duties more efficiently. This does not mean that such as those that consider sex dirty and sinful should equip themselves with the latest; let them go along the old path if they find it better. But do not condemn those that are lifting the veil of hypocrisy and are attempting to spread a saner and healthier view of sex.

* * * *

Science is the only sure thing left for the world to-day, politics have failed. They do no good and people are weary of them, but Science will always remain and advance.

Science cannot bring happiness. Nothing can do that. Happiness lies in man himself. He must make his own.

Prof. A. EINSTEIN.

The basest and meanest of all human beings is generally the most forward to despise others. So that the most contemptible are generally the most contemptuous.

FIELDING.

From time to time we read of the startling predictions of astrologers about some coming event. It **Prophets fail** may be about the assassination of some one of Royal blood or of some impending catastrophe such as the outbreak of another war.

It is strange that no astrologer foretold the fate of the Lindbergh baby whose disappearance and subsequent death under the most brutal circumstances, has horrified the whole world. The stars had no message for these gentry whose number is legion.

Baby Lindbergh's little spirit did not send his lisping message through space to the large army of spiritualists, who we hear, commune daily with the spirits of the other world.

Mrs. Morris's "Power" could throw no light on the tragic incident and none of Sir Oliver Lodge's departed friends could give us an idea as to what had happened to the poor child. They were as helpless as the police.

In India, land of Rishies, Yogis and holymen, no one could foretell the communal riots which have been an ugly feature of the City's life during the past month.

Recent unpredicted events have shown us the limitations of clairvoyants, astrologers, soothsayers, crystal gazers and their like, but still they flourish, for there are still people waiting to be fooled around the corner. ALI AKBAR.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

The meaning of the word "God" conveys different ideas to different minds according to their intellectual culture. To the plain man or woman, however, God is meant to be the Creator of the Universe. He is generally conceived as a Supreme Being in whose image man has been created. Generally when the question: "Do you believe in God" is asked your questioner, whom we assume is the plain man or woman, expects you to answer whether you believe in that Supreme Being who, he or she believes, created the world. In other words, your interlocutor expects you to believe in a Personal God as one has learnt from religious lessons. The Supreme Power, the Cosmic Intelligence, the Prime Mover or First Cause of the philosopher does not concern your questioner. To him or to her all these are meaningless terms which are hardly comprehensible. Supposing one such person asks you the question in the usual manner, and you, not being a believer in the existence of a Personal God, answer "No". Then your interlocutor triumphantly asks you: "Who then made the world?" "Who created you?" Your difficulty with such a person at once begins, for generally a questioner of this type is not cultured enough to understand your reply: "How do you know that the world was ever made?" Yet, it is in this very answer that the question of the existence of God can be intelligently discussed, and Rationalists ought to be well informed on the point in order to show a questioner that the proofs of the existence of God are not so evident as is popularly believed.

To begin with, the average questioner does not realize for a moment that the mind cannot conceive of a time when

there was no Time to Be, and no Space to occupy. He does not suspect for a moment that there is no proof whatever that the world had a beginning. If your questioner has no knowledge of Astronomy (most people of ordinary education have not) it will be impossible to bring home to him the fact that Astronomy does not support the belief that the Universe had a beginning, as in that case one would expect all the stars to be of the same age.

Now, it is a well known fact that they are not. The science of Astro-physics has successfully proved that some stars are older than others. The different colours of their light show this. Their physical conditions also indicate their age. For instance, some stars are giants because they have not begun to contract, a fact which shows that they are much younger than old ones which have contracted and become much smaller and compact. The stellar universe shows that there are bodies in it in all stages of evolution. There are countless nebulae which are in process of becoming stars, and cosmic dust which is condensing into nebulae. It is on record that new stars have come into existence within historic times. All this shows that while evolution is proceeding in the starry heaven, devolution is also at work thus completing the eternal cycle.

In talking of the eternal condition of the Universe, a fact which most scientists and philosophers believe, it is well to remember that individual celestial bodies must have had a beginning. Our Earth, for instance, began its individual career when it was detached from the Sun and started rolling as a planet round its parent. But in talking of the Universe

as a whole one must assume that it is eternal until it is proved that it had a beginning. People who think that they must believe in a First Cause do not seem to realize that if it is difficult to conceive the Universe as eternal and self-sustaining it is equally difficult to imagine a being existing eternally. Where was he when the Universe did not exist?

At this stage, probably one has realized enough to come to the conclusion that the interlocutor is too benighted in modern knowledge to pursue the conversation further. It is evident that he is a simple-minded ignoramus who firmly thinks that the lessons about God creating the Universe and all the creatures there-in are the soundest truths he has ever heard. It will be obvious that he imagines our planet to be the centre of the Universe, the theatre of God's activities as he has learnt from his Catechism. So again he may mockingly ask:—"How did things come into existence?" "Who created us?" It may be tedious and, probably a waste of time, to explain to him that as far as we are acquainted with living and non-living things there is nothing to prove that all were suddenly created out of nothing.

Everything, on the contrary, proves that things were evolved gradually; one crude form leading to another which unconscious Nature seems to have accomplished after many trials and errors. How did matter originate? We do not know. The difficulty is certainly not solved by introducing a Supernatural Agency which exists outside Nature and which is believed to be the author of it. No doubt, the idea of an extra-mundane or extra-cosmic power being the creator of the Universe appeals to some minds, especially to those who are reluctant to

leave a question unexplained. Such people think that the "laws of nature" which seem to be orderly and the signs of design in nature, point to a "law giver" and an intelligent designer. These old arguments, once considered to be irrefutable, have been abandoned by most serious thinkers as they contain fallacies which show their weaknesses. Most theologians, of course, still cling to these worn-out arguments.

Your interlocutor may now appeal to Reason, the voice of Conscience and the so-called religious instincts in man as proof of the existence of God.

It was once seriously maintained that we have *a priori* knowledge of the existence of God for our reason tells us so. As far as our reason is concerned, facts go against the proof of an intelligent being controlling the Universe. Things happen in this tiny world of ours for whose occurrence no intelligent being could be responsible. What is the use of talking of the mysterious ways of Providence, or accepting defeat by saying that the finite mind cannot judge the Infinite. If an appeal is made to Reason, then Reason must certainly rule against the possibility of a supreme, all-powerful being controlling and guiding the Universe. To conveniently admit that such a being exists is to gloss over many facts in nature which demand a satisfactory explanation. Take the case of man who is believed to be the Lord of creation and for whose benefit many things in nature exist. In his mighty and laborious struggle upward, man has taken hundreds of thousands of years to learn by bitter experience the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. Countless evils have been committed which a good and intelligent being could have easily made

us avoid. Man has devoted the best of his activities and energies to worship and propitiate that Being. He has offered his most sacred and dearest possessions to that Being—his own life and the blood of his own children. He has built the finest cathedrals, temples and mosques in which to worship that Being; he has offered innocent human victims and other animals, he has lavished praises and flatteries, abased and mortified himself to please that Being. He has prayed in the hour of his calamity and he has rendered thanks when he thought he has received a favour. Has this God ever helped mankind? Hideous crimes which revolt human nature, thousands of cases where Justice is trampled under foot, where the innocent suffer for the guilty, where abominable and heartless torture is applied to innocent people, where might and wrong triumph, where the weak are helpless before the strong and crafty, daily occur in this world. Why has God remained silent? Think of the millions who have suffered and perish owing to their sincere and honest convictions. Think of the helpless victims of the Inquisition which lasted four hundred years. Think of the horrible torture and cruel death inflicted by religious fiends on innocent people in the name of God. Why has He remained silent?

Think of the miseries and sufferings that people have experienced by famine, earthquakes, epidemics, wars, persecutions and other calamities that have visited mankind. Could not a good god have prevented such sufferings? Think only of what happened few years ago when the most "civilized" nations of the world slaughtered one another during four years amid untold sufferings. Think of the poor innocent people who were killed for no

fault of theirs, and their wives and orphans left to suffer and starve. Could not a good God prevent this? Think of a good god allowing a poor infant being snatched from his loving parents to be cruelly killed by human fiends worse than cruel animals, the Lindberg Baby. Could not a good god spare the life of that sweet child and spare the anguish of its poor parents? See an infant dying from such a cruel disease as meningitis or small-pox. Could not a good god be more merciful? No, our reason does not support the belief in the existence of an all powerful and good God. What we see is the bitter struggle for existence and the battle for life by men and animals against the blind forces of nature.

It is hardly necessary to dwell on the "Voice of Conscience" as a proof of the existence of a just and good god. Moral laws certainly exist among us, but there is no doubt that these too have been painfully evolved out of the laws of necessity, and that it is a code of behaviour imposed on the individual by the community. The dictates of conscience vary in different communities. The so called laws of God are always found to be the laws of the priests, the moulvis, the saddhus, the rabbis, etc.

Neither does the so-called Religious Instinct of mankind prove the existence of God. To begin with, it is a fallacy to believe that this instinct is universal. Anthropologists have shown that this instinct does not exist among many primitive people. This belief begins with the rise of civilization when people begin to speculate on the cause and nature of things. Even if that belief was really universal it would not explain much, as some quasi-universal beliefs as those in the Devil and Witch-craft have proved to be erroneous.

It is remarkable that the belief in God is strongest where education is the poorest. As a well known writer says:—"It is strange that if God has implanted a religious instinct, a sense of his presence, in the breast of man it should grow feebler in proportion as the head is enlightened, and should generally disappear where the knowledge is greatest."

Perhaps few will deny that the more the educated the higher the proportion of unbelievers. In fact, the more the world grows in wisdom the less belief in God there is. The reason is that scientists

and philosophers and other well-educated and thoughtful people do not find the proofs of the existence of God so clear as the simple-minded individual who imagines he sees them everywhere. With many of course, their early religious education accounts much for this belief. In the same manner the uncivilized man sees proofs of the existence of spirits or ghosts every where. According to his way of thinking all phenomena in Nature are caused by the agencies of spirits, good or bad, which control the world around him.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

TO PHOTOGRAPH THE UNIVERSE.

Sir Frank Dyson, the Astronomer Royal, opened the new Photographic Equatorial and Dome at the Norman Lockyer Observatory at Sidmouth, on May 28. The new instrument, together with separate building and dome to house it, is the gift of Dr. Robert Mond, a generous supporter of the observatory since it was founded.

The instrument consists of a battery of four giant cameras mounted on a pillar in such a way that by means of clockwork they follow automatically the movements of the heavens.

"There is no other like it in England," Sir Frank said at the opening.

"We shall expect to find a comet before

long, while small planets will be very readily photographed. Already a very interesting meteor trail has been recorded by one of the cameras."

Dr. Robert Mond said the importance of astronomical observation was increasing every day. We were learning a great deal of what went on in the stars.

While at Cambridge wonderful work was being done in tempting to split the atom by electric apparatus producing very high temperatures, the astronomer had only to point his instruments to a star to see the effect of splitting the atom. They could look upon the stars as heat laboratories provided, free, gratis, and for nothing.

THE DEATH OF SECTS.

At Belgaum, in January, 1913, I had the pleasure of giving one of my story lessons to 20 Hindu boys aged 14 to 16. The topic was "Service of the Public Good," and the little tales of social devotion included varied examples,—an ancient Roman, a Hindu (Ganguli, telegraph official), an English physician, a French soldier, a Swedish singer (Jenny Lind). Among the audience of adults sat three Roman Catholic "padres" from Goa, a Protestant priest and many Indian gentlemen. I was very pleased when, at the close of my lesson, the Chairman,—the Hon. Mr. Belvi,—said he thought the principles I had illustrated were those of universal morality. Mr. Belvi had quite correctly understood my aim. But I was all the time surrounded by the representatives of sects and theological parties,—Christian and Indian. We had a long discussion. Nobody objected to any of my stories, or to any of my ethical points. What the Padres from Goa thought I do not know. They said nothing.

In one form or another, I have been urging upon the attention of educationists and the general public, during some 40 years,—in India, in Europe, in the United States—this vital idea of a universal moral tendency in the nations and races of mankind. I do not mean that they all agree in their expressions of ethical philosophy; and I know how they differ in customs of sex, property, class, caste, social order, etc. But, when I look below these external and superficial variations, I detect among them all certain fundamental impulses of comradeship, co-operation, pity, honesty, justice, self-sacrifice. I have examined the accounts of many careful observers of life in Africa, S. America, Malay, New Guinea, Australia, and Maori-land (New Zealand), etc;

and I see everywhere this capacity of neighbourliness, though it is often obscured by cruelty and folly. But, like Socrates, I incline to attribute the vices to ignorance.

A number of educationists have planned a Conference at the Hague city in Holland (June 30 to July 2, 1932), at which we shall discuss many aspects and difficulties of History Teaching. My own contribution will put emphasis on the universal good tendencies of humanity, as displayed in the daily life of agriculture, mining, industry, arts, crafts, trade, seafaring; in the great thoughts expressed in poetry, drama; in the splendours of architecture, painting, sculpture; in efforts to observe and interpret the phenomena of nature and the human mind; in the duties and activities connected with family, home, village, tribe, city, nation, law, social order and government, and the larger ideal of international fraternity. We have reached a stage in our evolution when the liberal thinkers of the world find it impossible to explain the general good tendency of mankind by the doctrines of Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, etc. For myself, I recognize freely that these old Faiths and Cults were adorned by the virtues of many men and women. But in this year 1932, the world is passing out of the confused wilderness of the Gods, Satans, Angels, Hills, Heavens, and disputing Sects. We are slowly but invincibly moving towards the death of sects.

The Pope of Rome issued, last May an appeal to the Christian community to pray, to fast, to bow in humility before God, in order to win his mercy and kindness towards the human race, now suffering severe economic depression.

If we did not make this obeisance to the Almighty Ruler (said the Pope) we should have to endure "further Divine chastisement." This is the best message that Rome can issue to humanity at a time of crisis. It is a sectarian message. It is Roman, Italian, Christian. It expresses a theology which subordinates man to a God of wrath and chastisement, who mixes love with whips, swords, and

plagues. What the modern mind wants is a message from humanity, to humanity, and for humanity; a message that calls to man's native and universal courage, wit, perseverance, and spirit of co-operation. The sects appeal to our fear, to our bigotry, to our exclusiveness. The new time appeals to our capacity for valour, for generosity, for unity.

FREDERICK J. GOULD.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ERROR.

Human curiosity has, from very ancient times, tried to find an explanation of the Universe, and this has led to different systems of philosophy, the differences being due to the fundamental error of method which was inevitable before the advent of science. Felix le Dantec, one of the greatest of French biologists and rationalists, has so beautifully exposed this fundamental error that I cannot do better than summarise his argument here.

If Truth is to have any meaning at all and if there is to be any Science, it is of vital importance that we should be able to communicate our discoveries to one another. This can only be done if our method is objective and will become impossible if it is subjective. An exterior phenomenon can be described so as to be understood and verified by others, while what passes in one's mind can be described very vaguely if at all, and can never be verified.

Seekers of truth may be divided into two categories according to the object of their curiosity. The method depends on the object and there will thus be two methods which seem to be irreconcilable. I

live in the world and my curiosity may be about myself or about the world which surrounds me. In the first case, I follow the tradition, because that is what men started with. If I am curious about the world, without considering that I only know it because I exist or how it happens that I know it, I am a physicist. This second attitude is not at all common, but it is the only one which leads to tangible results which involve no contradiction. The first method gives us apparent truths which contradict the verifiable scientific truths found by the second method. My mind is so constructed that contradictions shock me to the highest degree. A large number of people adopt the first method, because contradictions do not shock them. Many adopt sometimes one and sometimes the other method, according to what they are speaking of, and without bothering about the contradictions.

Let us first consider the scientific method. Newton saw an apple fall and discovered the law of gravitation. But the apple would have fallen even if there was no Newton to observe it. We witness many events which are not affected by our

presence. We do not ask ourselves how we happen to be witnesses. We study the phenomenon, we measure it and compare it with others. This is how we do in physics. *Man has done wonders with physics.* He has not only discovered laws according to which phenomena happen, but he has even been able to predict some of these phenomena and profit by these predictions. This is Science proper. Man has constructed it without troubling to ask how he came to do it, and it is the marvel of marvels.

In the world which surrounds us there are also other living beings, some of them similar to us and some very different. Since, however, they are exterior to us and function without our intervention, *their study is a branch of physics.* It is undoubtedly the most difficult, but we have conquered so many difficulties that we do not hesitate to study them without involving ourselves. We apply to them the methods of physics, that is to say we do objective biology, which is a branch of physics. We have made considerable progress in it, but it is still the youngest branch of physics, in which progress has been slow, because the first workers did not observe the fundamental rule of objective science, viz. to forget oneself when one is only a witness of an exterior phenomenon. Centuries of labour were wasted because they mixed up the two methods mentioned above. In spite of this, we have now made sufficient progress to constitute a solid basis. The scientific method indicated here was not the first employed by man, but it is the only one which enables us to construct a communicable and verifiable science of remarkable fecundity, which allows us to derive advantage from the laws we have discovered.

Let us now consider the other method, the anthropomorphic method, which was adopted by our ancestors, and which is still used by philosophers. It must be confessed that it is also employed by physicists outside their laboratories, especially when they speak of living beings. This is easily explained if one considers the great facility afforded by this method to give a *verbal* explanation of complicated phenomena. It is the method of least effort, but it is absolutely sterile.

I live in the world, but instead of studying it without thinking of myself, I start by studying myself without considering that I am a part of the world. This leads me immediately to very simple results, or at least results that can be very simply expressed in human language, because human language was invented by our ancestors to describe the results obtained by this method. *I am, I think, I want, I act.* A subject and a verb, and there you are. Very simple statements, which everybody understands without effort. These are *common sense truths*. They are self-evident so long as one studies oneself exclusively as if the rest of the world did not exist, and if I were alone in the world, *this would be perfect.*

Unfortunately there are other people. They are exterior to me and I can therefore study them by the methods of physics. But man is a complicated affair when studied from outside. The scientific method frightens me where man is concerned, because it is too difficult to apply. I eliminate the difficulty by observing that other men are similar to me by their form, their gestures etc., and so it is very easy to apply to them the *common sense truths* which I have discovered about myself. So each of them is, thinks, wants, acts, as I myself am, think, want, act. Of course I do not know what my neighbour thinks,

nor can I anticipate what he wants, but that does not matter, because I compare him to myself, and this appears to me scientific, because I start from *common sense truths*. So I get the habit of making sentences in which man is the subject of the verb which describes the action: Peter eats an apple, Paul runs etc. Why? Because Peter *wants* to eat an apple, Paul *wants* to run, as I would do in their place, for I know very well that I do what I want to, and that *I could have done something else if I had so wished*. Of course I could not prove this last part of my statement, since any event happens only once, but I feel within me the liberty to do what I like, and that is enough for me. So I fill the world with beings like me, free to do what they like. Now, if I consider what the scientific method teaches me, I would be somewhat nonplussed, since it teaches me the determinism of the world outside me, and determinism excludes liberty. So there is contradiction, but that does not matter, since I started from *common sense truths*. Besides, the anthropomorphic method is so convenient that it satisfies my curiosity without effort by giving me a language in which I can express everything. For this purpose, it is enough to apply to things the formulæ previously discovered for men. It is enough to make sentences with a subject and a verb. Physics teaches us on the contrary that each apparently simple phenomenon is the combined result of a very large number of factors, none of which could produce it singly. But why bother about that when we can express everything so simply by imagining causes, forces, souls etc., all after the human model, which is so simple when one studies oneself as if nothing else existed? And then why stop there? All scientific curiosity ends when we imagine an invisi-

ble, all-powerful man whom we call god and who is the primary cause of everything that happens. *God wills it*. This formula satisfies the most fastidious in every case.

How can individual liberty exist for everybody without contradicting itself? Since the development of the physical sciences, one is obliged to believe in the determinism of all phenomena in the inanimate world. Not being able to deny this, we limit this determinism to inanimate things, and free-will becomes the privilege of living beings, who have not yet been properly studied objectively. So then, there are two kinds of physics: that of physicists, and another which will appear to be true and permit the verbal reconciliation of all the contradictions arising from the conflict between determinism and free-will.

Anthropomorphic language is very convenient. We learn it when we begin to speak. If it had not already existed ever since men began to speak, each of us would have invented it for himself. It is very convenient, but completely sterile. It excludes all comparison and measurement, to which physics owes its fecundity. Consequently any philosophy based on physics alone is very difficult to express since it has to be done in language which denies the fundamental truths of physics. It was intended from the beginning to facilitate every-day intercourse between men, and so is very convenient for that purpose, but unfortunately people believe in the absolute truth of what is expressed by this language and so fundamental errors have become very dear to us. Of course scientists have created a language based on number and measure, the mathematical language, which can express physical truths without contradiction, but this language is difficult to learn, and the

simplest human relations are so complex from the scientific point of view that it becomes impossible to tell them in scientific language. We could of course use the old language without attaching absolute value to the philosophy which results from it, but so few are able to resist the temptation, that philosophy remains spiritualistic. So there are two contradictory truths, physical truth which establishes determinism and excludes free-will, and the truth which follows from every-day language, which makes men fight all the time for unverifiable beliefs expressed in words devoid of sense.

Note, however, that the aims of these two classes of seekers for truth are not the same. Physicists want to find out *how* natural phenomena occur, in order to utilize them for human profit. Philosophers are concerned with the question of *good and evil*, which is perfectly natural, since they deal with relations of men to one another and hence want to find out how one can interfere with the production of pleasure and pain by reciprocal relations of man to man. Perhaps these good people did do some good when science was unknown, and perhaps also, with the best of intentions, they were the authors of the most terrible catastrophies. It would seem improbable that a system based on error can be indefinitely useful without the risk of occasionally becoming extremely dangerous,

I have already said that owing to the extreme facility afforded by language in simplifying statements of facts, our ancestors were obliged to invent an invisible and omnipotent god. This god, modelled on man, and the primary cause of everything, doubtless looked after the weather, but was more especially interested in the relations of man to man, since he was the

result of language created in order to facilitate these relations. Now our fundamental idea of liberty, combined with our concern for the question of good and evil, naturally leads to the idea of merit and culpability. God, greater than us in every respect, became the sovereign judge of all questions of right and duty, and as justice is not of this world, we imagined another world in which we should be judged by God according to our merits. *Of course all verification being impossible*, nobody had the right to doubt and nobody doubted. The laws of God were invented by men cleverer than others, and since divine revelation was given as their origin, nobody could dispute them. They became written law. The application of these laws had certainly some beneficial effects, but it had also some terrible effects. It would be difficult to say if the good was greater or the evil. I am not inclined to think that error can be good.

Yes, I call it error, because I believe in physics for the obvious reason that its truths are verifiable and communicable. Now, for all the world exterior to me, including all men (except me who resemble them), physics teaches us that there is no liberty. Liberty is a word which has *no sense except in anthropomorphic language* in which no word is defined with reference to facts. And as the idea of merit and demerit, recompense and punishment, (fundamental in every religion) is a consequence of the notion of free-will, I conclude that all laws based on this idea have a false foundation. Evidently, in spite of the progress of objective biology, physics is not yet advanced enough to explain man in detail, but it has established verifiable laws which impose a veto on certain explanations which contradict these established laws. Science tells us not to pay the slightest attention

to ideas of free-will, merit and blame, recompense and punishment. 'But then,' some one may say, 'by what do you replace them?' We shall see that later but it must first be admitted that a sound system cannot be based on an error. One terrible result of supposed god-made laws is that one cannot show any mercy without being guilty oneself. They require us to be ferocious and we shall always be ferocious, towards others, unless we remember that science prohibits a belief in free-will and hence in merit or demerit. This gives a reply to the ignoramuses who talk of the bankruptcy of Science. Science does not reply to questions about good and evil. It only tells us what is true or not true, or in other words, what happens and what does not happen.

Good and evil are connected with necessary social conventions on which primitive human societies were based. Some such conventions will always be necessary, but since these conventions must necessarily change with changing environment, it is always dangerous to give them the rigidity and absoluteness required by the supposition of an eternal god who has dictated them for all time.

There will be yet another objection. "You cannot deny", somebody will say, "that we have within us the innate idea of good and evil, right and duty." And I will not deny it. I am not a monster, I am a man, and like all men, I have such an innate notion. In me it is even somewhat exaggerated, and I have suffered a great deal from it. Of course this is a *common sense truth*. But I have done objective biology and have learnt the law of the heredity of acquired characters. Ancient errors are imposed on us by heredity and appear as evident as physical laws to which our ancestors have long

been subject. So if my ancestors have adopted certain social conventions during centuries, they appear to me as absolute truths on account of heredity. That is why, in spite of my biological convictions, I suffer from these conventions. But, as I have said, I do not believe in free-will. In spite of scientific certainties, I cannot at will get rid of the load of heredity I am obliged to carry, any more than I can drop a useless organ like the appendix for instance. Nor can it be removed surgically like the latter.

Thus there are two sets of ideas in us that appear to be evident. The first set is the result of the individual lives of our ancestors, who had to fight the destructive forces of the Universe. These are truths which lead us to geometry and mathematical physics. The second set is the result of social conventions to which our ancestors had to submit on pain of death. These give us ideas of justice, good, evil, liberty, etc. For the vast multitude, these constitute Truth with a capital T. They are however only the result of conventions which may have been useful once, but some of which have become harmful under our changed environment.

Which of these shall we accept? Philosophers are mostly for the Truth with a capital T, because they cannot rise above the language which contains in its syntax all the errors of past societies. By employing the scientific method for research and mathematical language for expressing our results, we find verifiable truths, and we are sure that if one man makes a mistake, another will find it out by using the same method and language. But most men do not know mathematics, so for most men Truth is that which is not verifiably true, because they are incapable of understanding any other.

Moreover, this pretended belief in Truth with the capital T is merely a transparent pretence, morality being, for most people, a set of rules from which they derive a benefit if other people observe them, but which they manage to break as often as they safely can. Promises are sacred only so long as you are not strong enough to break them with impunity. Treaties become scraps of paper when nations can afford to set them at naught. War is an appeal to strength, not to morality. A nation may conquer another by brute force without the semblance of

any kind of right, and still after a few years it is supposed to have a moral right to govern the conquered nation and exploit it, a right which is recognized by all the world. This is what ideas of so-called justice and right and duty are worth. And all this is supposed to be dictated by an omnipotent god. Society is based on hypocrisy, though very few are honest enough to admit it.

Science gives the only possible truth for any one who understands it. The other Truth is self-contradictory.

R. D. KARVE.

ADVOCACY OF RATIONALISM.

It is obvious that the success of a cause depends to a great extent on the quality of advocacy used in its support. Much precious time and many friends can be lost by the use of advocacy weak in its knowledge of facts, inappropriate in style or bad tactically. One who fulminates vigorously is a bad protagonist. Too passionate a faith in the cause has mostly an emotional and not an intellectual basis. This type of support is also the progenitor of advocacy that leaves one cold by its apparent lack of balance.

The love of synthesis is inherent in us all. Irrational rationalists are therefore legion. It is so satisfying to believe that ones little brain-pan is large enough to docket and reorder with the help of rationalism the whole world of facts. One might even wonder how the superstitious, God-fearing, Devil-placating crowd does not end up in the lunatic

asylum suffering one and all from a fatal confusion of thought.

Just because rationalism is so vitalising it tempts one to make a little go a long way. The need to fight down this temptation is of the utmost importance. There is danger otherwise of being flooded out by general opinions about general ideas expressed in a general way. One cogent scientific argument can confidently be weighed against reams of such stuff. For example, it is easy to carp or poke fun at the remote possibility of the existence of a Beaver-On-High. It is however no easy-going to refute completely the proofs of His existence based on the highly technical argument from the possibility of error.

It is patent that it helps the cause of rationalism to write soberly, non-vituperatively and most important of all to write without imputing base motives where

only pathological mental phenomenon exist. It is chicanery to say that a priest intoning a funeral oration is merely a scoundrel exploiting the savagery of his flock to fill his own belly. It is just as true to say that every scientist who has announced a discovery, to be proved false subsequently, has been exploiting the credulity of the world for his own ends.

It is falsely and therefore popularly believed that rationalists of the first order are always full of irrefutable arguments the very recollection of which spreads panic amongst the cohorts of the orthodox. It is interesting therefore to unearth some relics of the Huxley period. They well illustrate the doubt, caution, prudence and desire for the constructive that prevailed even in the pioneer days of Rationalism.

Huxley, the iconoclast of popular imagination, insisted as a Member of the London School Board, on the teaching of the Bible in schools. This was partly as a great literary heritage and partly because he was "seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling which is the essential basis of conduct, was to be kept up, in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion, in these matters without its use." (Essays III).

In his essay entitled "An Apologetic Eirenicon" he writes, "It is the secret of the superiority of the best theological teachers to the majority of their opponents that they substantially recognise these realities of things, however strange the forms in which they clothe their conceptions". This was written in re-

ference to the doctrines of predestination, original sin etc. and he goes on to say that "faulty as they are, they appear to me to be vastly nearer the truth than the "liberal" popular illusions that babies are all born good, and that the example of a corrupt society is responsible for their failure to remain so, that it is given to everybody to attain the ethical ideal if he will only try," etc. etc.

It is this dislike of jingo rationalism that one would like to see every vigorous young rationalist fully alive to. The only class that is worth proselytising in India at present is the cultured orthodoxy. The best of them are men who are proud of the subtlety of their ideas of reality. It is only natural that the use of strong language, senseless attribution of base motives and vituperation generally should antagonise them. Were it not for the meagre usefulness of such advocacy as a counter-irritant it would become the duty of balanced rationalism to exterminate it. Even if such advocacy had any real value it is worse than useless in India.

In India the cultivation of a sober rationalism has particular value. A country which has only two masticatories, arecanut and religion, can hardly be made to give up one of these two indispensables by a show of bad temper. If it is one of the acknowledged tasks of rationalism in India to fight the spirit of other-worldliness then it must also be admitted that blaspheming iconoclasm and a flood tide of invective would prove if anything a potent means of directly fostering the very spirit that it is desired to eradicate.

M. B. DALAL.

A LITTLE MILK.

The honest doubter is by no means a rare phenomenon in these days. But the honest doubter who is willing to rely wholly upon his own common-sense is a rarity still. He craves, as a rule, to thrust the responsibility for his doubts upon some exterior scape-goat, as well as to find some other prop for his thoughts than his own reason. Hence the frequently reiterated complaint: "You take away my faith and give me nothing in its stead."

Fortunately for myself, it is a complaint which I never thought of making—for the simple reason that having become an Atheist without assistance from any other person and in total ignorance of any anti-religious writings, I was quite unable to blame any specific person or book for "taking away" beliefs which common-sense had proved to be either purely theoretical or else utterly false. I do not hereby claim that my common-sense is of a superior order to that of the usual honest doubter. I merely assert that the dissolution of false beliefs does not necessarily require the assistance of any outside influence of the nature indicated. All that is necessary is the application of ordinary reasoning, such as one uses every day upon matter-of-fact problems, to those beliefs which cannot be proved and often are actually contradicted by experience.

As long as we pay no attention to such contradictions and do not choose to reason about these beliefs, so long will we cling tenaciously to them. But if these beliefs are a matter of serious import to us, and if our actions are dependent upon our being convinced of their truth, we cannot help applying a certain amount of reason to them. Given the urge to prove them

true, and granted a modicum of leisure in which to put them to the test of experience and reason, there is nothing to stop every man & woman of normal mentality from becoming an Atheist. Children, if left to form their own conclusions upon questions which are open to doubt (and religion is one), will inevitably become Atheists, in the sense that God will rank on the same mythical plane as all other gods and supernatural beings.

Now, in the absence of any influence from specific books or persons, what becomes of the complaint: "*You take away my faith*"? It is, of course, an absurd one. The only person responsible is one-self. And this is equally true in the case of persons whose doubts have been caused by reading or hearing others speak. One does not normally believe every word one hears or reads. Even the most credulous persons have been known to doubt the truth of some statements. Consequently the person of average intelligence inevitably applies, or consciously refuses to apply, his own reasoning powers to the statements and situations which he encounters. If his judgment decides in one or other direction, who but himself is responsible for the direction he finally decides upon?

No, my dear honest doubter, do not delude yourself, nor try to salve your conscience by putting the blame for your doubts upon some other than yourself. Rather—if you must blame somebody—blame your elders and teachers for instilling irrational beliefs into your head when you were of such a tender age that you were unable to verify them. But, better still, do not waste time in blaming anything or anyone. For your parents and teachers were no more responsible for

their own ignorance and credulity than you are for yours. And you have the advantage over them in that you are a generation younger and have at your disposal additional knowledge which they and the generation before them had not. If, in the acquisition of this additional knowledge, you conclude that some of the beliefs which you had hitherto taken for granted are false, do not shed bitter tears—like the child who discovers that Santa Claus is Daddy after all—but rejoice that your mind has become a shade less muddy than it was.

So much for the complaint: "You have taken away my faith." But what of the request to "give me something in its place"? Is this a reasonable request? Is it one that should be satisfied?

A south country vicar, writing in this paper, made a similar request a short while ago. He concluded his letter with the following analogy. "Don't leave the poor fellow to die of starvation! I must not be allowed to eat much just after having the poison (*i. e.*, of religions) force-pumped out of me . . . at least give me a little milk." The pathos of such complaints does not lie in the sad state of spiritual chaos which all persons who repudiate religion are supposed to suffer from, nor in the supposedly innutritious nature of the mental pabulum provided by Atheism. It lies in the fact that religion creates a state of mental flabbiness which renders it extremely difficult, not to say unpleasant, for religious persons to think logically about matters of beliefs. Deprived of their chief narcotic, namely the reliance upon traditional and antiquated authority, they find the light of present-day facts and reason too strong to bear with comfort. Yet what blind man whose sight had been

restored, would wish to return to his former state of darkness because of temporary discomfort caused by the light of real vision?

Why then does the vicar ask for milk? He uses an analogy—a dangerous habit of thought unless its limitations are borne in mind, which implies that the removal of something bad cannot itself have beneficial results unless something else is put in the place of that which has been removed. But the analogy of the blind man is equally applicable, if not more so, as an illustration of the particular situation we are discussing. And the analogy of the surgeon who removes a dangerous cancer from the body is also equally applicable. In neither case does the patient who has been operated on ask for something to replace what he has lost. Men and women who have been forced by the logic and evidence of undeniable facts to recognize the influence of religion for what it has been and still is, do not cry for some ethic or constructive policy to replace the faith they have lost. For not only do they come to see that faith as such, is no guarantee of a just and humane outlook, but they also realize that a faith which is based upon contradictions and untruths is bound to be unethical and destructive. And if they take the trouble to use their reason further, they also find that the dissolution of false beliefs leads automatically to the growth of a truly ethical and constructive attitude towards life.

For more than two thirds of my adulthood I have been a Christian and had been closely associated with ardent evangelicals. In spite of this it is still somewhat bewildering to me to discover how difficult it seems for Christians to appreciate the obviously ethical and constructive

nature of the beliefs which must follow on a conversion to logical Atheism. Yet when I come to think about it, the explanation is simple enough. All of us were brought up to regard unbelief (*i.e.*, incredulity) in matters of religion as positively wicked, as something inevitably leading to a loss of morality. Why, then, should we make any effort to try and understand what the term Atheism meant or implied? If we thought about it at all, it was a thought which prejudiced the whole question and cried "*Ecrasez l'infame!*" But how can any thinking man or woman "crush the infamous thing" unless he or she knows something about it? And it is just this necessity to know about the thing one wishes to crush, that the Christian avoids.

Honest doubters cry for "milk." Why? Because they have not taken the trouble to discover the logical consequences of a disbelief in the supernatural and in a so-called future life. They are, as a rule, so perturbed at the thought of their own disease; the natural egotism which we all possess is, in their case, so rudely upset at the idea of real death, that the only "logical" attitude for them is to fall back upon the illogical teaching of their own religious book. "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die," is the only alternative which ever seems possible to them as a result of believing that their own personalities do not continue to exist for ever. Yet this is no more than an added proof of the illogicality and mental obfuscation which religion breeds. For, in the first place, whether we die to-morrow or live for ever, eating and drinking is a necessity of life which even the most religious person usually takes some pleasure in. And in the second place, what is the profoundly immoral nature of being cheerful? Of course, it is not

the literal but the metaphorical interpretation of this saying which the Christian emphasizes. And this metaphorical aspect contains the implication that to be an Atheist, one must necessarily live in a state of bestial selfishness, from which all forms of altruism are excluded. But this is a favourite lie of religion whose sole purpose is to blacken Atheism at all costs.

The absurdity of this implication must be obvious to all except those who are incapable of reasoning beyond the end of their own noses. If I believe that when we die we are dead in every sense of the word as literally used, then it follows that there is no time like the present for getting things done which we want to get done. I cannot console myself with the thought that everything will come right at some time in the remote future, or that some mythical super-being will adjust all the maladjustments I find in my own or other people's lives. I am forced to make the best of the here and now. Again, following logically from this, the most casual glance at my own little environment convinces me that what I may regard as the best for myself is not by any means necessarily the best for my neighbour—a logical conclusion which is in flat contradiction to the attitude of Christians, who assert that nothing can be better for their neighbours than their own religion. As an Atheist, however, I am bound to admit that my neighbour is as much entitled to differ from me as he is to agree with me, and I cannot claim to adjudicate for both of us without consulting him. I am compelled, automatically, to spurn all bigotry and dogmatism. I do not, if I happen to be in power, assert the eternal truth of some authority, nor do I attempt to force it upon my neighbour because it upholds my views as against his. Automatically

I am led to consult with him and he with me, and to discuss what may be for the best of each individually, and of both together in all such spheres where our lives are bound to coincide. Automatically we base our investigations and judgments upon the needs of the case and upon facts to which both of us agree, not upon theoretical suppositions or unproven beliefs. And where we disagree, it must be upon points which do not lead to the curtailment or interference of the freedom of the other. "We will not do to others what we wish others to do to us," we would say, "unless we have it from their own mouths that they so wish it." Or, alternately, "we will act towards others as they wish us to act towards them, but only provided that they reciprocate."

The answer, then, to the request for something to replace lost faith is just this: Atheism has nothing and has everything to take its place. It has nothing, in the sense that nothing is necessary to replace a curse which has been removed. It has everything, in the sense that when the curse is removed, the whole of life becomes a field for enjoyment, improvement and active, acquisitive and happy co-operation, co-operation for the immediate diminution of human ills, both mental and physical; co-operation for the immediate increase of human welfare. What more can man desire? The craving for support from some entirely helpless

"omnipotence" is banished in the knowledge that man can stand unsupported with as great, and even greater, security. The uselessly passive method of prayer, with its fatalistic thrusting of responsibility upon some "unseen" and wholly inactive power, is discarded for the active method of personally tackling the problems of life with a view to their immediate solution. And lastly, the belief in a future life, with its inevitable temptation to postponement, its inevitable callousness towards the ills of others in this life, its inevitably egotistical concern for personal salvation—all these are swept away in the wider and more humane egotism which recognizes that happiness in this life should be the one great motive force of human existence, and that no genuine personal happiness can arise without some prompt individual contribution to the general fund.

If this "milk" be too strong for the Christian, then let him continue to cling to his helpless deity and his futile personal immortality. Whatever his beliefs may be, his end will be the same as the Atheist's. But if he realizes the falsity of his beliefs, let him no longer cry as though he had lost something of value and gained nothing. Let him stand up and be what he knows himself to be—a man, human and humane.

C. S. FRASER.
in "The Freethinker."

RATIONALISTS ON TRIAL

As is said on the front page of this magazine, the objects of the Rationalist Association are to create a scientific mentality among the masses of this country. It has therefore to be assumed that all the members of the Association have got this mentality and that they are convinced about the uselessness and futility of all superstitious practices. If, on the other hand, a non-member observes that even avowed rationalists, even though non-believers by inner conviction, are exactly the same as non-rationalists in their daily lives, he may justly draw the conclusion that membership of the Rationalist Association does not really indicate freedom from agelong influences of religion and ignorance.

All rationalists must therefore guard against lapses into non-rational behaviour in their daily lives. They cannot, in the very nature of things, be members of this or that religious association, wear caste-marks or holy threads, observe fasts, go to temple-festivals and so on. The writer is aware of the fact, that in many cases, external influences are so powerful, that it is impossible for all but the most exceptional to stick to their convictions and bring them into practice. But if there is any compulsion, one must try one's best to resist it, or if resistance is impossible, submit only under protest. We must always remember that we are on trial. We are being observed with far greater minuteness than other people.

To take only a few examples, every member of this Association must refuse to lend financial support to that idle and useless class of citizens, the priests. None of us should ever directly or indirectly pay a pie to them by celebrating religious festivals. Thread

ceremonies, festivals (?) in connection with death anniversaries of parents, *Satyanarayan*as, tree-worshipping festivals like *Vatapaurmima* and all similar occasions, where priests are fed and paid should be banished once and for all times from rationalist households. Even marriage ceremonies, if at all some rationalists think it practical politics to get married rather than live in a free union on account of the legal disabilities of the children born of such unions, must be performed by the registrar of marriages and not by the priests. We must in fact bring rationalism in our everyday life before we can be called true rationalists.

The trouble about educated Indians is that their attitude is still one of it-is-better-to-err-on-the-safe-side. If at all there is a God, they say, it is better to be on good terms with him. If he does not exist, well, we do not loose much. If you ask them whether they really believe that by momentarily taking off their shoes and bringing their hands together when the tramcar in which they are travelling passes a temple, they are really gaining anything, they will probably reply in the negative. But they will nevertheless continue to perform this senseless physical movement. The same applies to all those little things which mark a man who does not think for himself. Some time back I had occasion to speak to a German gentleman, who was surprised to find so many educated people, even professors of colleges, having caste-marks on their foreheads, charmed threads round their necks and wrists, pictures of Ganapati in their houses on the occasion of religious festivals and scores of other apparently small things, that he expressed the fear that they were either great hypocrites or

that their education was utterly faulty. Of course, I could have given him a retort in the accepted style of the popular press and drawn his attention to the mass of believers in his own country where a high standard of education is universal. But that would not have changed in the least bit what he saw here in India.

This state of things is due only to the reason-tight compartments in the minds of even the most highly educated. We must therefore be very careful as to the rational basis of our actions. A rationalist member of a *Hindu* deputation, a rationalist member of a *Mohammedan* club, a rationalist signatory to an appeal for subscriptions for a sectarian institution, will all be contradictions in terms. One cannot be both; a choice has got to be made.

There is another matter in which rationalists are on trial. I take as an example the question of temple-entry of the untouchables. As rationalists, we do not lay any store by temples and consider them as useless places. We would there-

fore like all of them to be utilised for some useful purpose, *e. g.* schools, public libraries, etc. However, as long as there are people who attach some importance to them, all rationalists would insist that temples supported by public money must be open to all irrespective of caste, creed or colour. (The owners of private temples, as long as the present basis of society continues, have naturally the right to prevent the entrance of anybody they like.) It is on this account that we have to adopt the apparently illogical attitude of supporting the demand of some people to go to a place of worship even though we do not believe in the efficacy of worship.

I have written the above not through any sense of superiority, for, I am not an exception to average rationalists. I only want to draw not only the attention of brother-rationalists but of myself also to the fact that we are all on our trial in our every-day actions and must guard against the charge that our rationalism is only skin-deep.

D. D. KARVE

CHURCHES AND MODERN THOUGHT.

By

VIVIAN PHELIPS.

It is not surprising that Mr. Vivian Phelips' "Churches and Modern Thought" has become one of the best sellers among thinking men to-day.

Written with clearness and refreshing candour it deals with one of the foremost controversies of our time.

The debt Christianity owes to earlier beliefs and the mass of other evidence, should convince the earnest reader that here is no religion of divine origin.

Opinions of eminent cleries, a study of comparative mythology and the devastating proofs of evolution all shatter the vain boasts of Christianity.

In its revised form, the book has been brought up to date. It covers an immense field and is so ably written that one cannot fail to profit by its study.

A classic of rationalistic literature, it should find a place on the shelf of every thoughtful reader.

C. L. D.

ARE WE PARSEES OR BELIEVERS IN ALL CREEDS?

The wailing of "A Parsee Youth" in the last issue of "REASON" makes interesting reading in as much as it gives one an idea of the home-life of the Parsees. The Parsees frequently claim to be the most educated and advanced community in India, but now thanks to the candid exposure of this boastful claim by several free-thinking Parsi-youths, the other communities in India know by now the true "advanced" state of our community.

It would seem that our disgusted youth has become very down-hearted by witnessing, nay by experiencing, the ordeal of superstitious and orthodox practices of the women of his community. And so to-day I beg leave of the Editor to allow me to express my candid views on what we girls with modern education think of the absurd practices of our orthodox but ignorant sisters.

"To begin with, why should we be called Parsees." Can we really be so when we observe "Amas" (The New Moon day) in the same manner and spirit as our Hindu Orthodox sisters? We do more than this; for instance, we offer to the goddess Kali the sacrifice of a goat on Kali Chandas day, break eggs on the threshold of our homes, sprinkle toddy all over our rooms, light the whole house with small lamps of ghee and eat more sweets during the four days of Divali than even our Hindu brothers and sisters dream of doing on those days. We vie with the Hindus in decorating our houses in the most gorgeous manner on those festivals to give the impression that the Divali is also a Parsi festival. Then comes the Holi and Nag-Panchmi. The

Holi-Mata would never forgive us if we were to abstain from offering her sandal wood, ghee and other costly articles; the Cobra Mahadev will never spare us when we run across him in the jungle if we do not offer him one pice worth of milk on the Nag-Panchmi Day. Woe be to us if we dare speak disparagingly of these practices. But then why leave off the Baled (Cocoanut Day) and the Tal Sankrati holidays? On the former day, one must tie round one's babies' hands the "baled lakris"—a picturesque decoration indeed!—and must attend, with the whole family the "Mela" and celebrate the holiday in a manner befitting a Hindu family. And on the Tal Sankrati Day we make a Hindu family ashamed of itself. We not only prepare and eat the Tal "Laddoos" as our Hindu sisters do, but we prepare special dishes of Khichdi, "Levta" fish and of curds and bringal. On the Dasera Day,—the cow's and horse's birth-day, special "malida" is prepared for our riding horses and floral wreaths are hung on every door step of our rooms. The whole house is topsy-tuvry on that day! We also celebrate all the Mahomedan holidays. Many of us offer sacrifices and pray at Pir's Dargha, so much so that even our conservative and orthodox papers at times raise a hue and cry against those Parsees who go and hold "Samathis" at a Pir's Dargha with other communities. However, nobody complains when we participate in the Mohorrum procession. We are, it appears, also allowed to subscribe when the Mahomedan riff-raff comes to our homes and collects money ostensibly for their free distribution of

"*Sarbat ice*". Why, some go even further and throw water under the Taboot during the procession on the last day of that festival. We always feel quite at home on holidays of all communities. It is a by-word with our rulers that we celebrate "Natal" (Christmas) with more dignity and pomp than even a devout Roman Catholic would dream of. The special Christmas Almond Cake must be there on our dinner table, otherwise how could we call ourselves the loyal subjects of His Christian Majesty? On the New Year Day we must prepare our special dish of good omens, I mean "dhan-dal". The floral wreaths must be there on all the doors of our rooms and at night there must be the New Year's toast with the help of Johny Walker or Tennant as these days of depression do not allow us to indulge freely in costly Champagne.

Now, can any one after this say that we are still Parsees? No, Mr. Editor, No. We not only observe Zoroastrianism, but all religions as any one would find from our mode of living. We may dance or smoke; we may imitate a "*Mudam*" or dress ourselves in the latest Parisian fashion, but will always remain in our private life, the old, fanatically ortho-

dox lot that we are. One can easily multiply the above examples, but these will suffice to show what a trial a Parsee life is to people who desire to move ahead with the times.

A PARSEE YOUNG LADY.

[One must sympathize with the difficulties of the Parsees in their social and domestic problems. It is believed that they have adopted the habit of placating all round on account of their peculiar position amidst the changing powers that have dominated the land since they have come to India. Lecky, for instance, thinks so. They had to adopt many Hindu habits to please the Hindus when these were in power; similarly with regard to the Mahomedans, Portuguese and English rulers. The custom of this wholesale imitation has stuck to them, and is, doubtless a great handicap to wholesome progress. Imagine a person anxious to move fast but being laden with heavy chains and weights! Such is, apparently, the position of the Parsee community at present. It is over-burdened with customs and habits most of them not of its own original culture.

ED. REASON.]

The great events in Human History were provoked by individual human beings exercising their wills to change the direction of human thought and action, or by natural catastrophes forcing men of insight to embark on new enterprises.

G. ELLIOT SMITH in *Human History*.

MY BROWSINGS IN THE NEWSFIELD.

On the first of August, Nasik will present the rare phenomenon of some odd 175 nude Sanyasis walking in two processions. Those worshippers who feel disinclined to pray in these materialistic times should make it a point to go on a pilgrimage to that historic city of ancient temples and age-old idols to behold the edifying spectacle. Since the processions will start at 4 a. m. and get over at 6 a.m., the halo emanating from the saintly monks is expected to light the way. The doubting Thomases are also exhorted to be on the spot to witness the miracles.

At the recent Exposition of the body of St. Francis Xavier in Goa, quite a number of miracles were reported. It is anticipated, however, that Kalaram of Nasik will perform more wonderful miracles, if miracles could be said to be more or less wonderful. At any rate, the number of pilgrims visiting Nasik during the Sanhastha Fair will far exceed the crowds of devotees who flocked to Old Goa during the Exposition. Consequently, the temple authorities in Nasik feel quite confident of receiving much larger sums of money by way of donations to the deities than the ecclesiastics could collect during their last periodical wind-fall in Goa.

About 30,000 fakirs alone are said to be on their way to Nasik. India must indeed be the Gods' own chosen land to be blessed with so many holy men. The total number of them all over India will at least be three or four times the figure. It must be borne in mind that it is a part of their holiness to live on the sweat of others and to do no work of any kind.

V. D. Rishi writing on Spiritualism in "The Amrita Bazar Patrika" claims to have communications with the dead. His *modus operandi* seems to be based on the model of W. T. Stead with Subhadrabai taking the place of Julia, thought it is not clear whether the former is dead or alive. Since she assists at the seances with her spiritual presence, she appears to have already entered the kingdom of the dead. If any disincarnate person gets lost in the spirit world Rishi's spirit friend Oka helps him to trace the wandering soul. The Indian brand of Spiritualism admits the possibility of reincarnation, because sometimes neither Oka nor Subhadrabai can locate some disincarnate persons in the spirit world. This exponent of Indian Spiritualism also claims to have received messages from the dead in the next world to the effect that the dead share the sorrows of their dear ones in this world and that they find their new life full of interest and helpfulness and a kind of joy. It is all very vague and void of interest. One wonders whether Rishi has obtained any glimpses of the Christian Heaven and Hell.

* * * *

In India, Fate has quite a number of votaries. If any disbelieve in her decrees the recent story of how a young man met with his death will make them shudder. Warned by an astrologer of an impending calamity in his family, Mr. L. A. Krishna Iyer, a Brahmin resident of Talli village, in Calicut, decided to have all the members of his family around him and summoned to his village Mr. Seshadri, his 22-year old son-in-law, from Lahore. Presumably he imagined that fate would not travel all the distance from Lahore to Calicut. But,

* * * *

notwithstanding his precautions, his young son-in-law met with death in peculiar circumstances. The astrologer was unfortunately right.

The young man was learning to swim in a tank led by a rope from the shore when suddenly the guides lost their hold. The youth struggled in vain and went down. His body was taken out about half an hour later. The doctors who were summoned to give first aid declared that life was extinct and that death had ensued immediately after he had gone down, as there was no water in the stomach.

That triumphant minister of Fate must have felt very much elated and his clientele may have increased considerably. The number of his predictions which did not come true, however, was not mentioned.

* * * *

The Catholics have been rejoicing over the submission of Rev. N. G. Kuriakos M. A., B. D., L. T., one of the most educated, distinguished and influential Malabar Jacobite priests, to the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church. The reverend gentleman, however, is forty seven years old with his family consisting of his wife and seven children.

Yet *father* Kuriakos is said to have made a sacrifice in becoming a Catholic priest. A pious prayer is shot up to heaven by his well-wishers that he may be used for the greater glory of God and for the good of the church he has joined.

* * * *

The Hindu Mission of Mothabari in Kaliachak, P. S., held a meeting at which eloquent speeches were made condemning the bane of sub-castes, a special feature of which was that prominent people drank water from the hands of a chamar. Not a bad way of doing away with castes.

ROPERA.

DON'T BELIEVE IT!

Superstition is the last infirmity of feeble minds. By this criterion we are revealed for what we are—a nation of intellectual throw-backs, a community of muddle-headed, credulous morons. Especially in the month of May.

Beneath a veneer of culture and pretence at sophistication we nourish still superstitions that put us back to the intellectual level of Paleolithic man.

And that, too, in our so-called centres of progress, our great cities, our flourishing towns. It is really rather appalling to contemplate.

People are ashamed of being dirty, malodorous, illiterate, uncouth. They resent the charge of stupidity, credulity, ignorance. Yet, quite unashamed, a very great body of men and women are not only grossly and barbarously superstitious—but proud of it.

There may be no great harm in observing some superstitious ritual in a spirit of fun. But when people make a fetish of these observances, when they permit some completely absurd ceremonial to take on an almost sacramental character, then it is another matter.

Life should be governed by reason and some code of ethics. The lives of the superstitious are governed by what is stripped of pretence, sheer animism, the propitiation of such articles as common salt, wood and leaning ladders. Shades of Newton!

Put that way, any superstition takes on its true character. It is said that we cannot escape the past, and we have the superstitious, very much with us to prove it.

For every superstition that mars the mental make-up of modern man is a link that binds him to his early ancestors and makes him fit companion for the caveman and high-priest of Mumbo Jumbo.

The cult is so widespread, the consequences so enervating and degrading, that to catalogue the current superstitions taken seriously, by otherwise sane people *would fill a telephone directory.*

Every day has its own pet superstitions, every month, too. And of them all this merrie, merrie month of May the most.

Just why has May such a hoodoo aspect for these nit wits? It is hard to understand, for with the Romans, to take but one example from ancient times, May was the month of the Floralia, or welcome to nascent summer.

Does it not seem incredible that a well-educated couple should shrink from marrying for no other reason than that the month is that one of all the calendar marked out by Nature for mating?

What does this phenomenon of our times really portend? What does it mean that there are practitioners with the crystal, professional numerologists (what an absurdity!) astrologers, and a host of other completely preposterous panderers reaping harvests from their credulous and, for them, happily numerous dupes?

It is a symptom of decadence—that and nothing else. One cannot have it both ways. We belong either to the world of Sir James Jeans, Professor Einstein and Dean Inge, or to a benighted region wherein we go our ways under the eyes of many gods whose good-will we must propitiate.

You may say: But nobody takes these things seriously.

You are wrong. They are a good deal more in earnest about them than they are about the nominal religions they profess. People who claim to be good church folk won't bother to cross a church door year after year.

But they would no more walk under a ladder, sit down thirteen to table, marry in May, go to sea on a Friday, or live in a house numbered 13, than they would forge a cheque or commit matricide.

What, after all, does this sort of thing really amount to?

It is simply the unconscious tribute of undeveloped minds to primitive cults, when man was afraid of the world about him and sought to win the favours of the unseen malign spirits of tree, rock, mountain, stream or cloud.

The truly superstitious individual should remember that his condition is made possible only because of his moronism. For where there is reason there can be no superstitious cult. The two are oil and water.

Fear! That is at the root of these fantastic and contemptible rites. They go back to the dawn of time, when man, cowering in his cave, looked up at the storm-clouds and saw behind the lightning flash and thunder roar, the face and voice of a monstrous deity.

An exaggeration? Not at all. For consider. There are people who firmly

believe their destiny depends upon the commission or omission of some trivial ritualistic practice of superstition.

Imagine it!

Try to conceive an Unseen Power who is wooed and won, or alienated by, well, say, salt cast over a bare shoulder, or a finger touch upon polished oak!

No, superstition is a symptom of a revived Paganism. And in the past Pagan peoples have perished. This is a thought

to be commended to all who have surrendered reason to fear. One thinks of the aged countryman robbed of his all under threat of ill-wishing by a toothless hag, with pity.

But for the product of our so-called modern world who is no better there can be nothing but complete contempt.

GEORGE GOODWIN.

in "*The New Passing Show*."

AT THE SECRETARY'S TABLE.

Response to the appeal for funds.

We very much to regret to say that the response for this appeal has been exceedingly poor, poor beyond the worst expectations, even taking into consideration the very bad times. This month we will follow up this appeal with a letter to every one of the members and we trust the response will be more generous.

Renewal of Subscriptions.

This has not been as brisk as one would have liked it to be. It was in last July, when the first number of "Reason" appeared that the new members started joining. Will such as those as joined in July kindly renew their subscriptions?

Mr. Vakil's lecture.

In response to the invitation in the last issue, Mr. Maneklal H. Vakil, M.A., LL.B. delivered a lecture on "The New Outlook" at the Student's Brotherhood Hall on Thursday the 23rd. It was well attended. The lecturer gave his ideas in the form of a story.

Free Books.

Mr. Ch. Abdul Gani B.A., Hony. Secretary, R.P.A., Sandila, W. P. writes to say he can send some publications of the R.P.A., and other literature on Eugenics free to any one desirous of having them on sending the necessary postage:—They may select from the following Birth control and Eugenics, The field of Eugenic reform, Eugenics in America,

Modern Eugenics, Eugenics Review, Thinker or Believer, A plain man's plea for rationalism, the Training of the Young, and many others.

Enquiries.

Since the communal riots and the article by Mr. Cooper we have had many inquiries about the Association and requests for copies of "Reason". We hope that many of them who felt that the spread of a rational outlook was very necessary for India would not hesitate to join the Association.

Mr. Cooper.

When this issue reaches you Mr. Cooper will be on the high seas on his way to England. Mr. Cooper is a well-known stamp-collector. He has proceeded to London to present H. R. H the Prince of Wales with an album of stamps bearing the special post-mark of His Highness's visit to India. During his stay in England Mr. Cooper hopes to meet some Rationalists in that country.

New members.

The following have joined the Association. Dr. B. Perraju M.B.B.S., H. S. Kamath, I.C.S., Thomas G. Muthiah, Jamalladdin Makhmoor, K. D. Banajee, A. J. Mathews, P. D. Billimoria, J. L. Joshi B.A., LL.B., Dr. K. G. Mudaliar, and "Moolji".

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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August, 1932.

[Monthly ;

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

Can Theists be members of the R. A. I?

Can persons that believe in a God be members of our Association is another question that is asked of us. A straight yes or no is impossible as an answer because the ideas of God are so varied. Theology is no more straight-jacketed. As a result of the repeated assaults it is now clothed in a loose gown. The ideas of God therefore have undergone many changes. The belief in a personal God, like the avenging one of the Hebrews, or

the bearded God the Father of the Christians or the various deities in the different mythologies, is limited only to that section of the public which has yet to learn a great deal. We and they are at the moment poles apart. This group will not entertain any idea of joining our Association. There is another group of educated people who feel there must be a God. The essence of this idea of God is vagueness. As they have the correct scientific knowledge of the universe, and

as they want their God to be something bigger than this universe and all it contains and does not contain, their imagination has to run wild. They try to express it in the word "Supreme" which is if not anything else, a very happy way of saying anything with a limit on one side only. To many of these the mathematical God of Jeans or the clock-winder of other scientists have an appeal. Not having witnessed anything that can occur without a cause, they cannot conceive of the origin of this universe without a God, though, in the same breath they admit that this God could originate Himself and exist by Himself. They do not see the discrepancy because they have not yet washed out of their minds the conceptions of spirit and matter.—The difference between an Atheist and such—Theists is that while the former is waiting with trust in human capacity to elucidate obscure points, the latter has neither such trust nor patience. He illuminates his ignorance with a hypothesis. After that most of them leave their God where He is, in a highly inaccessible place. Such an attitude cannot be said to hamper the objects of the Association. The parting is so far distant; there is a long stretch of road traversed together. Companionship to that length is certainly worth it, because, looking as far ahead as possible, it will never be possible to reconcile these two sets, for in these final stages, feeling and prejudice come in and both of these can be argued only up to a point. If I understand correctly, the Rationalist Association was started to fight superstition and priestcraft, of which we find such a great deal in our country. I cannot conceive of a theist of the above type who will oppose a fight against the above evils. Therefore, I feel that, all persons who have only a figure

head of an indefinite Supreme power, but are opposed to the exploitation of the masses in the name of religion, should be welcomed into the folds of the R. A. I.

Drawing upon God's Bank.

There was a Vicar of a Parish whose faith in God's bounty knew no bounds. His was one of those faiths that was really a gift from God, because he hoped even after the event. With such a faith, he embarked upon a plan to beautify his church. He called the decorators and asked for an estimate to redecorate the church. Their figure was high, his earthly bank balance was low, but his trust in God was unlimited. The decorators were therefore ordered to start their work. He needed a string of saints, I mean statues, to keep watch over each pillar. No money again but hope in plenty! A cable was sent to Europe. The feast of Christ, the King, was approaching; the church compound needed attention. The men were set on the work. The bills came in one by one. He went round his parishioners, offering not a hundred per cent interest, but a hundred-fold return, of course in the next world. Some gave others did not; a few bills were paid. There was a big sum still due and the contractors were pressing. Even those who gave at first were now satisfied with the six per cent, in the local bank. He prayed before mass, during mass, after mass, while visiting the sick, while marrying the young while burying the dead. He even followed the famous general of the last war—asked little children to receive communion and ask god to help him. Yet it was all useless. His bank account disappeared. Nobody came to his help. Then he heard voices promising him help. Saw bank-notes heaped on his table. He was asked

to go for a change. He went and did not delay his departure to God's bank. He has not yet returned, his creditors are not waiting any more.

It is upon such a God that His Holiness the Supreme Pontiff wants us to have trust. Prayer to this god is his solution for this world's economic crisis. It does not need a financial expert to see the absurdity of this advice. Our friend tries to hit it off by pinning Atheism and Communism together, because he is aware that the majority of mankind now shuns Communism, though it is doubtful whether that majority will be permanent. But Atheism though so widespread in the land of the Communists is not foreign to other countries. Why even, outside his one palace, he will find a good few Atheists. There is not the ghost of a chance of killing rationalism by creating a prejudice against it. Whatever might be the solution of the present bad

state of affairs, it is certainly not the destruction of atheism and rationalism. These two attitudes in life have enlarged the sphere of human happiness by liberating the human mind from the shackles of priestly control and permitting it to experiment and explain. One of the means that is being largely employed to tide over the present financial stringency is strict economy. Could not the Pope order his followers to do likewise?—The money that was recently wasted in Dublin over the Eucharistic Congress is enormous; so also is the collection made by various churches in one guise or other to be wasted on candles, artificial flowers and priests. All this money is spent by ignorant people in the hope of redeeming souls burning in purgatory or with the more selfish object of reaping a hundred fold some day. But they forget Heaven's Bank only receives deposits but never returns them.

ALI AKBAR.

A POOR REVIEW OF A FAMOUS BOOK.

"The Hindu" of Madras is decidedly unfortunate in having a reviewer of the type of "Maudgalya" to review rationalistic literature. The poor fellow does not appear to understand the A. B. C. of rationalistic philosophy and ideals and yet he presumes to criticize the famous work: "The Churches and Modern Thought" by Vivian Phelips, a work that has been most favourably reviewed by almost all the leading newspapers and magazines in the English-speaking world. All agree that it is a work of outstanding merit presenting the case for Rationalism against Christianity with a logic and erudition that command the respect and admiration even of candid clergymen and other enlightened supporters of Christianity. I have no idea who the reviewer of "The Hindu" is; but after the long rigmarole which purports to be a review of a serious and out-spoken work, I should not be surprised to learn that he is one of those Hindu mystics known in the West as "word-spinners". One is glad to say that despite the very bad impression that this class of Indian "philosophers" have created in Europe and America on their incompetency to speak on modern thought and ideals, there are many able Hindus in the country who can speak or write on the same most intelligently. On reading the tirade of "Maudgalya" on Rationalism in "The Hindu" of the 4th July last, one cannot help coming to the conclusion that he has a poor grasp of the trend of modern thought, and that he is biassed against the spirit of free and candid inquiry in the domain of religious speculation. He seems to resent that such bold incursions should be made in the sacred region, and evidently believes that any superstition is better than no belief in the

supernatural. He begins by admitting that Mr. Vivian Phelips' book has done good in exposing the pretensions and claims of dogmatic Christianity, but immediately condemns it as a destructive work, with the usual cant that Rationalists have no constructive programme, an absurdity oft-repeated by people who do not seem to understand what they mean. This class of people evidently consider any belief, provided it is popular, to be better than no belief at all, and they look upon the same as a standing edifice which one has no right to pull down unless another can be immediately built in its place. As a matter of fact, Rationalism has a constructive programme far more important than any of the prevailing religions which detract men from the true path they ought to follow to obtain greater happiness for all. In inviting people to think gravely and rightly and to trust to Reason and experience rather than to arbitrary assumptions and authorities, Rationalism aims at showing people the folly of wasting their energies after chimeras, after phantoms, after imaginary beings, in other words, in the so-called "spiritual" exercises which have done no good to the world. Rationalism teaches that men are more in need of their fellowmen's help than the gods are. It also teaches that to be interested in this world that we know and do every thing to make it a better world, is a better occupation than wasting one's activities and energies about a future world of which we know nothing.

The religion of the Rationalist is, indeed, the service of man, a more important belief than all the creeds which teach that the service of god is the thing that

matters. The service of God benefits a hierarchy whose influence in the world has not been for the benefit of any body except itself. The rest of the criticism of Maudgalya is really too ridiculous for serious consideration. For instance, he is surprised that "to the Rationalist the Unknown is simply the Unknown". What else can the unknown, even with a capital letter be to any body? The concern of the Rationalist with such a region is one of caution. One is free to investigate by all known methods whether there is anything in it, but certainly not to waste time in mystical speculations and consider these as the noblest pastime man can think of. To "Maudgalya" "The Unknown" is evidently a region full of supernormal beings with whom one can get into communication and he is annoyed with the Rationalist because he does not encourage such activities. There, you have the mystic completely unmasked!

He is rather contemptuous, as this class of people generally are, about the teaching of Modern Science regarding the Universe. He fully believes that there is something beyond the Universe and he thinks that those who do not allow their imagination to wander into that region are the greatest simpletons going. One gets an idea of his intellectual bent when he opposes Bergson to Haeckel and Herbert Spencer on the question of Vitalism. No biologist of repute now-a-days admits that any mysterious principle accounts for the phenomenon of life. Bergson, who was no biologist, believed in such a principle and his book "*L' Evolution Creatrice*" is nothing else than an attempt to resuscitate the old discarded theory. He changed the words "vital energy" to

"elan vital" and the opponents of materialism, generally idealists with a queer philosophy, immediately shout that he has crushed the materialism of the nineteenth century! While Bergson captivated the minds of some shallow thinkers his view fell flat on the scientific world. Biologists, especially, smiled and passed along; so much for Bergson. After this one would be really surprised to learn that Maudgalya has some advanced views on psychology. He still believes in the antiquated and discarded method of introspection as the study that reveals the nature of consciousness. Introspection, as every modern student of that science knows, confuses the issue and no modern biologist adopts this method in the study of mind. Unless one knows thoroughly the evolution of mind from the lower animals, primitive man to civilized and highly civilized man, one cannot grasp the meaning of consciousness with its full expression in civilized man. Physiology and Pathology throw searching light on the question and a study of these subjects is indispensable to understand the phenomena of consciousness and its co-relation with the brain. Maudgalya evidently believes it to be an entity capable of acting independently of the brain, a fallacy which only an ignoramus in modern knowledge can entertain.

His dissertation on experience is also fallacious. He confuses this with imagination. He blames the Rationalist for not taking the religious experience of the individual seriously. He speaks of the reality of such religious experience and believes that there is a lot in it which the Rationalist has no right to ignore. All that the Rationalist can say about it is that there is nothing in the individual religious experiences to claim his serious consideration. All experiences should be liable to

verification, but how is it possible to investigate the religious experience of a person? While he may possibly think that it is transcendental, the practical Rationalist would reason that it is the product of the individual education, early impression, religious training, environment

and temperament. Experience of this kind is rightly considered to be allied to hallucination and to take such experience seriously is more likely to lead one astray than anything else.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS OF EARLY MANKIND.

Religion may, with more convenience than propriety or accuracy, be defined as a belief or beliefs indicating the mental attitude of reverence for, or mortal fear of, a transcendental Power or Supreme Being which intuition tells us, or is believed to tell us, must exist in some form or other and must in some fashion shape the course of human existence.

Very defective as this and all definitions of so complex a subject as Religion must be, it at least serves to suggest what seems to be true of the origin and meaning of all religions. For whether it be assumed that primitive man had a religious faculty or not, *a priori* reasoning not inconsistent with the result of anthropological research tells us that early forms of worship all centre round the fear of some Being, whether imaged in familiar objects or inherent in the elementary forces of nature, which primitive man often believed to be animate, and which, apart from the laws of immediate causation, he believed had some direct influence over his destiny.

It is necessary then to keep constantly in our minds that the ultimate origin of all forms of religious belief or beliefs is fear of some power, of some extra-terrene intelligence. His voice was heard in the

storm and the tornado. Poetically he is pointed out to us in all his grandeur in the wonderful galaxy of stars in the heavens. A Power easily roused to anger and as easily propitiated by suitable offerings.

Herodotus tells us that, according to the information he received from the Egyptian priests, their written history dated back 11,340 years, or nearly 14,000 years prior to our time. They introduced him into a spacious temple and showed him statues of 3410 high priests who had in turn succeeded each other. Their books were chiefly concerned with gods and the manner of propitiating these gods in times of anger.

Plato tells us in his fragment *Timaeus* that the religion of the lost continent Atlantis—"was pure and simple." The people made no regular sacrifices but fruits and flowers. The Atlanteans worshipped the sun. The first religion of Egypt (which, according to Plato, was the chief colony of the Empire of Atlantis) -was "pure and simple; its sacrifices were fruits and flowers." Temples were erected to the sun "Ra" throughout Egypt.

The Phoenicians worshipped Baal and Moloch, the one represented the beneficent, and the other the injurious powers of

the Sun. Quetzalcoatl, the founder of the Aztecs, condemned all sacrifice but that of fruits and flowers. The ancient Mexicans believed that the Sun-god would destroy the world in the last night of the 52nd year and that he would never come back. They offered sacrifices to him at that time to propitiate him. They extinguished all fires in the kingdom; they broke all their household furniture; they hung black masks before their faces; they prayed and fasted, and on the evening of the last night, they formed a great procession to a neighbouring mountain. A human being was sacrificed exactly at midnight, a block of wood was laid at once on the body, and fire was then produced by rapidly revolving another piece of wood upon it; a spark was carried to the funeral pyre whose rising flame proclaimed to the anxious people the promise of the god not to destroy the world for another 52 years.

Precisely the same custom obtained among the nations of Asia Minor, and other parts of Asia wherever Sun worship prevailed, at the periodical reproduction of the sacred fire, though not with the same bloody rites as in Mexico.

To this day the Brahmin of India "churns" his sacred fire out of a board by boring into it with a stick.

The Romans renewed their sacred fire in the same way, and in Sweden even now a "need fire" is kindled in this manner when cholera or some other pestilence is about (Tylor "Anthropology").

A belief in ghosts is found in both hemispheres from time immemorial. The American Indians think the spirits of the dead return to form and features which they wore while living; that there is a hell and a heaven, that the souls of the wicked sometimes wander over the face of the

earth appearing occasionally to mortals. The Zunis set apart a day in each year which they spent among the graves of their dead communing with their spirits and bringing them presents, a kind of "All Souls Day". The Stygian flood, and Scylla and Charybdis are found among the legends of the Caribs (Dorman "Primitive superstitions.")

The Oriental belief in the transmigration of souls is found in every American tribe. The souls of men passed into animals or other men. The souls of the wicked passed into toads and wild beasts. Among both the Germans and the American Indians "lycanthropy," or the metamorphosis of men into wolves was believed in. In British Columbia the men-wolves have often been seen seated round a fire with their wolf-hides hung upon sticks to dry. The Irish legend of hunters pursuing an animal which suddenly disappears, whereupon a human being appears in its place, is found among all American tribes. That timid and harmless animal, the hare, was singularly enough, an object of superstitious reverence, and fear in Europe, Asia and America. The ancient Irish killed all the hares they found on May-day among their cattle, believing them to be witches. Julius Caesar gives an account of the horror in which the animal was held by the ancient Britons.

The Calmucks regarded the rabbit with fear and reverence. Divine honours were paid to the hare in Mexico. Wabasso was changed into a white rabbit and canonized in that form.

The transmission of spirits by the laying on of hands and the exorcism of demons were part of the religion of the American tribes. The witches of Scandinavia and Britain, who produced tempests

by their incantations, are duplicated in America. A Cree sorcerer sold three days of fair weather for one pound of tobacco. The Indian sorcerers around Freshwater Bay kept the winds in leather bags, and disposed of them as they pleased. Among the American Indians it is believed that those who are insane or epileptic are possessed of devils. Sickness is caused by evil spirits entering into the sick person. The spirits of animals are much feared and their departure out of a body of the invalid is a cause of thanksgiving. In both continents burnt offerings were sacrificed to the gods. In both continents the priests divined the future from the condition of the internal organs of the man or the animal sacrificed. In Peru and Mexico there were "colleges of Augurs," as in Rome and Greece, who practised divination by watching the movements and songs of birds. (Dorman "Primitive Superstitions"). Animals were worshipped in Central America and on the banks of the Nile. The Ojibbeways believed that the barking of a fox was ominous of ill. The peasantry of Western Europe to this day, have the same belief as to the howling of a dog.

The Kickapoos are the early Darwinians. They think their ancestors had tails and when they lost them the impudent fox went every morning asking how their tails were, and the bear shook his fat sides at the joke (Dorman.) Among the natives of Brazil the father cut a stick at the wedding of his daughter: "this was done to cut off the tails of any future grand children" (Tylor.)

Jove with the thunder-bolts in his hand is duplicated in the Mexican god of thunder Mixcoatl, who is represented holding a bundle of arrows:—"He rode

upon a tornado, and scattered the lightning" (Dorman.) The Peruvians believed that men were sometimes metamorphosed into stones. The Oreidas claimed descent from a stone as the Greeks from the stones of Deucalion.

When we glance at the customs of early mankind we meet again the same universality of human error. The Phoenicians, Hebrews, Egyptians and Arabs practised circumcision. In Honduras the natives circumcised their boys before an idol called Icelca. There is a very curious and apparently inexplicable custom called the "Convade" which extends from China to Mississippi valley; it demands that when a child is born, the father must take to his bed while the mother attends to all the duties of the household. Marco Polo found the custom among the Chinese in the 13th century. Strabo mentions that among the Iberians of the north of Spain, the women after the birth of a child tend to their husbands, putting them to bed instead of going themselves. The same custom existed among the Basques only a few years ago. In Biscay "the women rise immediately after childbirth, attend to the duties of the household, while the husband goes to bed taking the baby with him and thus receives the neighbours' compliments" (Michel) The same custom was found in France and is said to exist to this day in some cantons of Bearn. Didoros Siculus tells us that among the Corsicans the wife was neglected and the husband put to bed and treated as the patient—"the father lay groaning with his head tied up, while the mother tended him with food and prepared his baths." The same absurd custom extends throughout the tribes of North and South America. Among the Caribs in the West Indies the man takes to his bed as soon as the child is born,

and kills no animals. And herein we find an explanation of an ancient custom otherwise inexplicable. Among the American Indians it is believed that, if the father kills an animal during the infancy of the child, the spirit of the animal will revenge itself by inflicting some disease upon the helpless little one. The Brazilian father takes to his hammock during and after the birth of the child and for 15 days eats no meat and hunts no game. Among the Esquimaux the husbands forbear hunting during the lying in of their wives. Among the Abiporres the husband goes to bed and one would think "that it was he that had the child." (Dorman) Here, then, we have a very extraordinary and unnatural custom existing to this day in both hemispheres reaching back to a vast antiquity and finding its explanation only in the superstition of the American races. A practice so absurd could scarcely have originated separately in the three continents; its existence is a very strong proof of unity of origin of the races in both hemispheres, and the fact that the custom and the reason for it are both found in America, while the custom remains in Europe *without the reason*, would seem to imply that the ancient population of America was by far the older.

The Indian practice of depositing weapons and food with the dead was universal in ancient Europe and in German villages; even nowadays, a needle and thread is placed in the coffin of the dead to mend their own clothes with while all over Europe the dead man had a piece of money put in his hand to pay his way with in Hell (Tylor). The American Indian leaves food with the dead, the Russian peasant puts crumbs of bread behind the Saint's picture on the

iron shelf, and believes that the souls of his forefathers creep in and out and eat them. At the cemetery of Pere-la-Chaise, Paris on "All Souls Day," they still place cakes and sweetmeats on the graves, and in Brittany the peasants that night, do not forget to make up a fire and leave the fragments of the supper on the table for the "Souls of the dead."

The Indian prays to the spirit of his forefathers; the Chinese religion is largely ancestor worship, and the rites paid to the dead ancestors, or "Lares", held the Roman family together. We find the Indian practice, (of Brahmins, and of high caste Yogis) of burying the dead in salt and sand, in a sitting posture, in use among the Nasamoniad, a tribe of Libyans. Herodotus speaks of the wandering tribes of north Africa, says—"they bury their dead according to the fashion of the Greeks. They bury their dead sitting and are right careful when the sick man is at the point of giving up the ghost to make him sit and not let him die lying down."

Sutteeism—the burning of the widow upon the funeral-pile of the husband—was extensively practiced in America (West). So also was the practice of sacrificing warriors, servants and animals at the funeral of a great chief. Beautiful girls were sacrificed to appease the anger of the gods, as among the Mediterranean races. *Fathers offered up their children* for a like purpose, as among the Carthaginians.

Tattooing was practised in both hemispheres from remote times. Among the Indians it was fetichistic in its origin. "Every Indian had the image of an animal tattooed on his breast or arm to charm away evil spirits" (Dorman's "Prim. superst."). The sailors of Europe and

America preserve to this day a custom which once was universal among the ancient races. Banners, flags, and armorial bearings are supposed to be survivals of the old totemic tattooing. The Arab woman still tattoos her face, arm and ankles. The war paint of the American savage reappeared in the Woad, with which the ancient Briton stained his body, and Tylor suggests that the painted stripes on the circus clown are a survival of a custom once universal (Tylor's "Anthropology"). In America as in the old world, the temples of worship were built over the dead. Says Prudentius, the Roman Bard: "there were as many temples as sepulchres". In both hemispheres we find tree worship and marriages to trees as among many castes to-day in India. The ancient American doctors practiced Phlebotomy. They bled the sick man because they believed the evil spirit which afflicted him, would come away with the blood.

In Europe phlebotomy continued to recent times, but the original superstition out of which it arose as in the case in many others, was forgotten.

Here is an opportunity for the philosopher to meditate upon the amazing perversity of human nature, and the persistency of hereditary error. The superstition of one age becomes the "science" of another: men were first bled to withdraw the evil spirit, then to cure the disease: and a practice whose origin is lost in the night of ages is continued into the midst of civilization, and only withdrawn after it has sent incalculable millions of human beings to untimely graves.

Truly this old planet would be an excellent place to live in, but for its religions—its abominable religious beliefs and barbarous customs.

J. D. JENKINS.

THE ADVANTAGE OF ATHEISM.*

If any thing can be rightly termed in this world as the greatest boon to humanity it is "Atheism", the denial of all religions. There is nothing else that can be compared to it. It is the one thing that can bring together the divided races and nations of the world, and form them into one great human race. It is the mightiest weapon that will rid humanity of the many curses from which it has

been suffering and will free the individual from the many ills to which he is invariably falling a prey.

"Atheism" or denial of all religion is in a way the highest religion. There is no other religion that can stand on an equal footing with it. This religion has no God or Prophet. It is free from both of them. There is no friction, no chaos, no war in this religion. There is perfect

* Translated from Urdu.

peace and harmony. There is no enmity with any one. There are no religious dogmas in it. There are no disputed religious beliefs. It has no past and does not worry itself with the future. It requires no "Saviour" no "Messiah." Its followers do not worry themselves with questions like "What is" and "What was."

Followers of all religions praise their own religions and preach them to others. The Atheists also have a right to praise their "religion" and to preach it to others. They have a right to do it for the good of humanity. They have a right to do so to increase their number. If their number grows they can colonise in some place and establish an ideal society. They can thereby declare it to the world that "Atheism" is the highest form of religion and that it is the religion of Nature. *They can thereby establish a new order, do away with the distinctions of caste and creed, colour and nationality and unite the entire human race. They can then set up a democratic government for the whole world based on equity and justice.*

In my humble opinion the following should be the programme for the followers of this highest of religions, namely Atheism :—

- (1) To speak a simple universal language.
- (2) To practice one form of simple living which would make all happy.
- (3) To work for the establishment of a universal government based

on principles of democracy.

- (4) To think right, to speak the truth, to do the right, to be good and to unite.
- (5) To co-operate in good deeds, to help others and to love others.
- (6) To abolish Purdah system, to give equal rights to women, to educate them and to honour them.
- (7) To try to be healthy, to take food with caution, to develop the medical science.
- (8) To consider things harmful to health as "*haram*."
- (9) Not to waste time, to have fixed rates of all commodities.
- (10) To prevent beggary.
- (11) Not to steal, cheat or commit forgery.
- (12) Not to say prayers in any form which is harmful for human life. The belief must be that there is no need of prayers.
- (13) To remove illiteracy, poverty and unemployment.
- (14) To celebrate the arrival of a new season by means of merry-making.

All those who believe in this form of religion or the Natural State of religion should please communicate with the undersigned :—

Sayed Mohamed Yehya Khan Ainullah,
Kalyan Mansion, Dongri, 4th Floor,
Bombay, 9.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE SOUL.

Of all the expressions of the human thought, none excels in mystery the concept of the soul. Even the idea of God is traceable from a process of logical evolution from it. God, in a true sense, is the soul of the universe. His existence is as closely linked with the totality of finite existences that we collectively call the world, as the soul is supposed to be related to individual beings, men or animals. It is not necessary to overlook the fact that later metaphysics developed the fashion to deny correlative souls to our mute brethren. But the primitive mind of man very early recognised the right of the quadruped generations to be represented in the spiritual plane as fully and effectually as if they carried the human brains. In that instance, the savage is more impartial (and perhaps more logical too) than even a spiritualist of the present century, who, while conceding souls *per capita* to the worst two-footed idiots found on earth, compels the wisest specimens in the creation outside of man to be huddled together under one counterpart, the group-soul.

In the nomadic pastoral stage man believed that life in all its forms was animated by spirits, each peculiarly appropriate to its kind. He worshipped the tree-spirits, and the spirits of diverse birds, and beasts. Animism and totemism were his religious cults, whereby he sought to propitiate the particular spirits reigning over the means of his sustenance. Each clan had its sacred totem and the members of that clan located the soul of their existence therein. Trespass against the totem meant evil to the entire body of the clan, just as injury to the group-soul of the ants, for instance, in modern theosophy would work hardship on all ants.

To this militia of tree and animal spirits the later era of cultivation added the corn-spirits. Customs of celebrating the festivals of these spirits have been uniform throughout the world, and relics of primitive thought are discernable even to-day. Worship, fasts and feasts are implements whereby the spirits are invoked in order that they might assist humanity by increasing their herds and making the fields yield richer harvests.

Where do these spirits live? In primitive imagination, they lived in living beings, and at death they mysteriously transferred themselves into other abodes. Much of the fear and confusion in savage conduct may be explained on the basis that the soul of the departed has somehow a potency for evil even more than during actual life. The spirit of the murdered enemy or the dead chief had a grim rigour on his imagination. He designed charms in a hundred ways, and found comfort in carrying bones, rings and diverse other oddities about him, and observing a thousand taboos, to prevent trespasses from the land of the dead. The evidence is almost conclusive that the idea of the soul is an abstraction in human psychology by a contrast between the dead and the living. If a stranger passing through a ripe corn-field is mistaken for the corn-god, and a hare running out of harvested barley crop is imbued with spirituality and if ceremonies gather round such trivialities, truly, human imagination could do worse than believe in the reality of the spirit, the soul. The Golden Bough by Sir J. G. Fraser is a collection of rational upanishads tracing out the evolution of the soul. The migrations of indwelling spirits are faithfully traced in the suppositious belief in the mind of

man from the time when he was emerging from the brute in every corner of the globe. The same persistence in posthumous vitality is the root of the universal tree of the immortality of the soul. For, when it is conceded that the destruction of the physical body does not put an end to its resident spirit, there is no other limitation on its existence short of the eternal one, i. e., immortality, except perhaps a later solution of its merger in the universal spirit, the spirit of God. Religion, the world over is concerned, therefore, very intimately, with the passage of the soul, and its injunctions on occasions of birth, marriage, and death indicate the care to be taken to further its safe sojourn during life. Ever since the brain could frame pictures of objects in their absence, the faculty of imagination has been weaving fictions concerning the unknown beyond. The distinction between truth and falsehood, the concrete object and its abstract idea, comes into being for the first time when man could leave the solid ground of physical, tangible sensations or perceptions, and wander high in the air riding fast on the new invention of mental transport. Science is investigating the reality of post mortem existences, and so far the labours of the spiritists cannot be considered to have enforced conviction. Life *dehors* the body is as yet an abstraction and is not known to persist apart from living organisms any more than colour or taste may exist devoid of the rose or the mango. If to-day the scientific world remains ignorant of pure psychic existences, and research into the antiquity of man discloses the tracings of the belief in primitive fiction, it is not an unwarranted presumption to think that what we and our ancestors understood by the soul was no more than the expression of the living body.

In a way, the words expression and impression are merely relative. Their meaning depends upon the aspects from which they are viewed. The soul is the expression of the body just as light is the expression of a star, and heat and light that of the sun. These emit their rays in their swift courses and are ever marching ahead. Astronomers believe that there are stars whose light it takes years to reach the earth. While the you twinkling star strikes the retina overnight, the real star is not there at all. It was there when the ray proceeded from there years ago, its shooting soul reaches us to-day, while its real body is housed in a far distant abode in its prodigious march. Even so the souls of great men persist long after their bones are interred in the grave. The soul of Shakespeare, for instance persists in Hamlet and Othello, the best expression of an exalted human experience. His soul is immortal in the only sense in which mankind has an idea of immortality, in that his classical exposition of human life is bound to have a universal appeal, subject, of course, to the bar of language being crossed. The soul of an artist persists in his work, and of the scientist in his discovery. The practice of naming their products after the producers is a recognition by the world that the soul of the producer or inventor lives in the object. It is not in everything that the man did, and in every moment of his life, but the essence of his being, the residuum of his existence that really constitutes his soul, the real expression. Viewed in that light, myriads of lives pass away, soulless as it were, without any outstanding achievement during life. Many are born unknown, live unheard, and die unsung. But the expression, the meaning of their existence is not in the limit equal to zero.

They live in their progeny, and the Hindu belief that one descendent may sometime come into being that will liberate all ancestry from a lower world is, whatever its literal truth, a fine conceit resting on the hope of ushering into the world a great name, an outstanding link in the chain of forgotten fathers.

Consider the case of a living personality. Even his soul is not really coexistent with his corporeal being. His domestic expression is his own home. He puts his very life into it, and when at home, he is his full self. But suppose he removes himself from the domestic environment and is temporarily in a strange land. His soul pervades the erstwhile habitation, even as the light from the distant star raises an illusion of existence nearby, while the real globe has penetrated the distant wilds of illimitable space. His itinerant genius sends forth its native inspiration to enquiring friends on his return, but the metamorphoses of his address are keenly impressed on the sensitive portion of his soul, the home. Nay, he himself feels, that on his happy return to it, he is his completer self, and that a considerable gap that opened in his wandering camps has after all been filled. It is really hard to predicate where the soul of the master is during his absence from home.

The essence of the idea of the soul, then, is that phase of existence, which is the best expression of its being, that activity of the body, or that product upon which its meaning is best impressed. Parents live best in their children which are their soul. And out of the many such children, he or she alone stands for its parent who truly and faithfully represents his or her genius, and taste. It also frequently occurs that just as a forgotten forefather suddenly flashes across

the horizon of fame in one of his distant progeny, the soul of a shooting meteor is lost to the world, and none of his issue catch the light. The sons of famous men are seldom themselves famous. The birth of a great soul is as much shrouded in mystery as the constitution of an atom. We go on analysing in either case the laws that are supposed to regulate the march of genius and the coming together of electrons and protons, but the why and the wherefore of them both remain yet to be solved.

In another sense, again, the earth may be said to constitute the sun's soul. His light and heat are in the main responsible for life on this planet. Others there may be, that are undergoing a like process of life-evolution. But one need not be wedded to the doctrine of a single indivisible soul. So far as it might be ascertained, the earth was initially part of the sun-substance, and is nurtured by it. The green verdure, the mighty oak, the tiny ant, the roaring lion, and astute man are the best expression of solar charity. May we not then truly locate the soul of the sun here? Why do we accuse primitive science of its geocentric arrogance, when we are unable to discover as yet any centre of solar vitality more fruitful than our planet, tiny though it be?

If the centre of solar activity is the earth, it represents his soul in the essence of his being. It is a fond delusion to view the mighty sun as essentially resting in this tiny abode thousands of miles removed. But the task of locating the geography of the soul is none the less complex. If a star that sent out its ray several light-years before is but a groping vagabond unlocated in space at the moment it pierces the eye, and if this feeble impression is all that its soul is

capable of making on us in its subsequent history, where are the souls of all those stars and planets that strike millions of eyes of the dead and the living and yet leave as it were no traces of their impression on their experience? May it not be said of these stars and planets that while we discern their cool or fiery orbs, we are not having glimpses into the real centres of their existence, the very souls of their being, which camping elsewhere farthest from our observation, are eluding all investigation, and our optical instruments have yet to evolve a power to gather in for us their real strength? It were

an uncouth analogy, perhaps, to extend the same idea to the soul of the universe, the idea of God. Our efforts to catch his ray may after all be misdirected letters failing to reach an absent addressee. The quest of God and of the soul may be a futile attempt to reach the dead through the Dead Letter Office; while seeming to approach them mankind has for ever been deluding itself into many a cruel and torturous mirage of thirst, greed, exploitation and untold suffering.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

FINDING THE LORD.

If, as a stranger in a Scottish town, you wish to find your way, you are directed by a process of negation. "Aye, it's the Museum ye're wanting. Ye see yon building? It's the Town Hall. Weel, the Museum's no' there. Ye see yon clock? It's no' there, either."

I happen to be a person of indefatigably enquiring mind. No piece of information is too small or too useless for the satisfaction of my curiosity. I know what happens when you pull the alarm-signal in a railway carriage, and how the guard knows it was you who did it.

So one day I went to the local parson and asked him how I could find God. He received me with open arms. Apparently he doesn't get many trade enquiries nowadays. "My poor ignorant fellow", said the parson, "Where were you educated?"

"Nowhere," I said.

"Nowhere? Where did you go to school?"

"Eton," I replied, fingering my Old Borstal Boy's tie.

"It's a pity you didn't find the Lord when you were a child", he observed, "Before the age of seven, if possible. After that age, young persons show a regrettable tendency to argue."

I humbly enquired what I should do about it.

"Read the Bible!" he boomed. "It is the Word of God. Read the Holy Word. And read it on your knees."

Being a man of full habit, I found the prescribed attitude rather difficult. I compromised by keeping the Book in a small apartment in my residence, and whenever I sojourned there, I studied the Holy Word.

Some time later, the parson called on me. "My poor heathen friend", he said, "Have you found the Lord?"

I replied with some enthusiasm that I had gathered quite a lot of information

about him, from an absolutely reliable source, as the book was written by God himself. God, it transpired, was an old gentleman who walked in the evening in a garden. He had a fondness for apples and dislike of snakes, and ferociously punished anyone who took fruit from his favourite tree.

He had a phobia against anyone ever seeing his face. When people heard him coming, they had to cover their eyes. God had a very close friend called Moses, but not even Moses was allowed to look at God's face. But once, in a moment of expansiveness, God showed Moses his hinder parts.

God was fearfully irascible and uncertain-tempered. He admitted the existence of other gods, but announced that he was better than they. He took a special interest in some wandering savages called Hebrews, and promised them practically everything, provided they admitted he was above all other gods. All the same, he was a jealous and uncomfortable god to have. Once he slew almost half the tribe because an up-to-date ruler ordered a census. It appears that God promised the Hebrews that they would be as the sands on the seashore, but objected to anyone counting noses to see if it were coming true.

God was always slaughtering his Chosen People wholesale, whenever some trifle upset him. He was, on the whole, rather a backward-community person, and objected to practically all progressive institutions. He had primitive ideas about social organisation, and punished anyone who wanted to alter things. He loved blood and the slaughter of animals, and liked nothing better than a nice present of a hundred foreskins, taken from slain unbelievers. He enjoyed the smell

of well-cooked food, and liked his priests to have a good time.

I recounted all this to the parson, and he listened to me with surprised horror. At first he said these things weren't in the Bible, and looked hurt when I didn't seem to be aware that his authoritative denial was final. However, I produced the Holy Book and showed him the relevant passages. He then said that I did not understand the passages, which contained hidden spiritual meanings not perceptible to my gross non-Christian mind. I replied that the statements were in plain unequivocal English in a reliable translation and were written by God himself. He then said I should read in a reverent way, and not in a nasty literal fashion.

Finally the parson explained to me confidentially that when God wrote the parts I had been reading, he had to use various uncultured Hebrews as amanuenses, and these old Hebrews were so pig-headed that they wrote everything down in their backward-class way, and God was not to blame. I asked if God couldn't have made them take down his dictation correctly, but from what the parson said it appeared that God didn't choose to do this: for some reason he preferred his secretaries to mislead everyone. However, said the parson, if I left the Old Testament and studied the New, I'd find written there what God really meant to say.

So I studied the New Testament, and learned a number of surprising things. This New Testament is about the same God as the Old, but he appears to have changed a lot. First of all, he now claimed to be the only God in existence—the others, his former business rivals, are mere shams.

In the New Testament, God visited a village maiden. He didn't appear in the transaction personally, but visited her in the form of his own ghost. The maiden became pregnant, but she explained to her fiancé that she was still a virgin and it was God's ghost that had taken advantage of her. So the fiancé—described as a simple countryman—agreed that it was all right. God then arranged to enter the virgin's womb, and was born as his own son.

So God and his own son walked about the earth as a man, accompanied by his ghost—hence he was three persons in one. In fact, Jesus (as the man was called) often said prayers to himself, addressing himself as "Father".

God went about like a kind of sadhu, with only one suit of clothes, sleeping on the ground, and living by begging. He took a pride in doing no work, but he must have suffered many discomforts, what with the vermin and dirt inseparable from that kind of life. He talked in parables, and everyone who listened found it very impressive, but no one ever knew what he meant. To this day Christians argue about the absurd speeches he made, and the different sects find in his words authority to do almost anything, and to interfere with almost everyone, according

to their personal prejudices. Whenever God incautiously made a straightforward statement, it was such balderdash that parsons still spend a lot of their time explaining that he did not mean what he said.

Finally, God made himself such a nuisance that the Governor had him arrested and executed. This proceeding still causes Christians to exclaim in horror, though they themselves constantly sanction similar executions.

When I related the results of my latest reading to the parson, he could not contain his indignation. He said that I would not find God by reading about him, after all. What would happen was that God would give me loathsome diseases and bad luck, and after that I would, with gratitude, discover that he had been in my heart all the time.

Meanwhile, he said, I was a criminal and a blasphemer, and if ever he heard me repeating what I had learned about God, he would send for a policeman and have me locked up. Almighty God, it appears, is under police protection. In the circumstances, it seems safer to stop looking for him altogether.

EMBUSQUE.

OBSCENITY LAWS.*

Obscenity Laws in all countries are some of the most iniquitous laws in the world. They are extremely liable to be misused and do a great deal of harm and not the slightest good to anybody.

The World League for Sexual Reform, in its Congress held in London in 1929, has passed a Resolution as follows on this subject :—

"Sex and Censorship. This Congress holds that obscenity and impropriety are matters too subjective and indefinite to serve as a basis for law. Human beings should be so educated as to be able to meet all kinds of knowledge and decide for themselves what they personally will avoid or reject as obscene. In literature and art judgments differ widely and any form of censorship or subsequent prosecution lead to the condemnation of works of artistic or scientific importance. On these grounds we declare ourselves against all forms of censorship on sex subjects in literature, scientific publications, pictures and other representations.

As a first step we demand the removal of such censorship authority from the sole jurisdiction of magistrates; and for the defendant we demand the following rights :—

1. To bring medical, psychological, sociological and artistic expert testimony in its favour.
2. To appeal to a higher court and trial by jury, which is at present impossible in some countries."

Considering that the World League has the support of such eminent thinkers

as Arnold Bennett, Prof. Carr Saunders, Dr. Havelock Ellis, Prof. Dr. Forel, Prof. Freud, Prof. Patrick Geddes, Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, Judge Ben Lindsey, Victor Margueritte, Dr. Robinson, Bertrand Russell & Dora Russell, Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Prof. Westermarck and others, this resolution cannot be lightly disregarded.

No intelligible definition has ever been given of obscenity, and still the law says it is a crime. This violates an elementary legal principle. The definitions that have been given are so ridiculous that they will not bear examination. The consequence is that a magistrate can fine you for obscenity or even send you to jail because he does not happen to like your face, though of course that will not be the reason given. If you appeal to a higher tribunal, the sentence may be confirmed or enhanced for exactly the same reason. The League of Nations, consisting of representatives from countries stupid enough to make such laws, has naturally followed the same course and entrusted to Customs Authorities in different countries the task of obstructing the circulation of obscene literature. World-famed writers like Zola, Voltaire, Rousseau, Victor Hugo have been declared obscene by magistrates whose names nobody has ever heard. In America and Ireland, Birth Control literature is considered obscene and in France it is still worse, a man having been punished for announcing a lecture on Birth Control.

What then is obscenity? Is nudity obscene? Man is apparently the only

*(Substance of a lecture delivered by Mr. R. D. Karve on 6th December 1931 at the Students' Brotherhood Hall under the auspices of the Rationalist Association and held over so long because his case was *sub judice*.)

obscene animal, since nobody objects to other animals being naked. St. Clement of Alexandria is supposed to have said "How can I be ashamed to name parts which God was not ashamed to create?", a very sensible remark for a Saint.

India has imported the idea of obscenity with the British Government. It certainly did not originate in a country where even processions of nude Sadhus are allowed. There is a class of educated people in India who take pride in British prudery. There was recently a heated controversy because a Poona monthly dared to publish a picture showing a woman just out of her bath, with a wet sari through which her back could be seen. There are lady doctors in Bombay who refuse to treat male patients. There are nurses in Poona who refuse to attend on male patients. Prominent journals refuse advertisements of Birth Control Literature.

British people encourage the idea that the French are a licentious people. One has only to see the English and Americans in Paris to be undeceived. French literature is more advanced than English and naturally shocks British prudery. It is a surprise to find, therefore, that the crime of obscenity is a French invention. The French Revolution brought it together with so-called Liberty. It is interesting to note that the steam engine was invented about the same time. Before the French Revolution, the French Penal Code, based on old Roman Law, made no mention of obscenity. All license was allowed except against religion and Government. This French invention was eagerly taken up by other countries. The first law against obscenity in France was passed in 1791 and was worded as follows: "Those convicted for having

publicity outraged the modesty of women by an indecent act or by the exhibition and sale of obscene pictures or having favoured the depravation and corruption of youth, will be condemned to pay a fine of 50 to 500 francs with imprisonment not exceeding 6 months." In spite of the words 'publicly' and 'women', this contains the fundamental fault of all these laws, that there was no definition of 'obscene' and on this ground it was opposed by Robespierre and others. It was passed all the same and was further aggravated several times until it took its present form: "Whoever commits an outrage against good manners by journal, tract, sketch, painting, emblem etc. will be punished by a fine of 100 to 5000 frs. and imprisonment of one month to two years," and the Police Court was the final authority. The Police and some other officials can, in several countries, confiscate writings or objects if they think them obscene, which is a temptation to add to their own collection.

What is the mentality of the people who make these laws and those who interpret them? Rouvier, Finance Minister, who in 1904, supported a similar law, had himself been accused of exhibitionism in 1876, and acquitted by benefit of doubt due to political influence. Chief Justice Cockburn, whose interpretation of obscenity is to this day accepted in England and India, though it is the most idiotic interpretation ever given of any law, was himself a man of doubtful morals. The Encyclopedia Britannica says about him that he was a man "of small stature, but great dignity of deportment. He was fond, too, of society and was throughout his life addicted to frivolities not altogether consistent with the positions of dignity which he successively occupied." It was as a

cloak to his frivolity, then, that he gave an interpretation which, as Rubenstein says, "extended the scope of the Act to embrace potentially not merely the works of some of our most eminent poets, but any book in general circulation, except perhaps *Whitaker's Almanac* and the *Telephone Directory*." Most ridiculous definitions have been given by different authorities. A French magistrate defined it as a rape of eyes and ears, but rape implies violence, and to write a book or publish a journal and sell it to people who pay a price to procure it is very far from violence, since it evidently gives pleasure to them. A French author trying to explain the law says: "The law tolerates licence, but not obscenity." Now the French Academy says in its Dictionary that 'licentious' means 'what offends modesty', and 'obscene' means 'what offends modesty openly'. Apart from the question 'What is modesty?', how does a magistrate distinguish between what offends modesty openly and what offends modesty, but not openly? Another author, a laureate of the Academy of Moral and political Sciences in Paris, has tried his hand at defining the word 'obscenity.' First he says, "what hurts the intimate and natural sentiment of modesty.", but this being evidently unsatisfactory, he explains: "In the obscene, there is always a low, commercial interest. One cannot call artistic or literary works obscene even if they are unfit for children. Art will become impossible if we consider children's interest in this way. There is only one way of distinguishing obscenity from art or science: the artist or scientist does not work for money like the producer of obscenities." Now this is perfectly ridiculous and false. Artists and scientists do get money from their work, and why

not? On the other hand, the best gallant literature (which would be called obscene was written anonymously by well-known authors, and a good deal of it has been published by rich bibliophiles at enormous expense without any hope of profit (editions of 50 copies, for instance).

Eminent lawyers have confessed that it is impossible to give a precise definition of this crime, and the very man who brought the law of 1882 before the French legislature says: "The attempt to define this crime has proved fruitless, so we have only defined the several ways in which it can be committed." Nothing can be more absurd. A French comment on it is: "Suppose the law said, 'there is a crime which you can commit with a knife, or a type-writer or a machine gun or a fountain pen, and your punishment will be so and so, according to the means you use.' But what is the crime? That we cannot tell you, but if you commit it, you know what you will get."

Ideas of morality differ enormously in different countries. So when the League pretends to regulate the spread of obscene articles, it simply means that it allows the Customs authorities in every country to confiscate what they choose to consider obscene, and if you try to argue with them, they can even impose a penalty. Of course we all know how honest the Customs authorities in Bombay are, but there is nothing to prevent them from confiscating anything they fancy for their own collections. They have of course the right to be or to appear stupid and confound nudity and obscenity, and I have had several books confiscated because they dealt with the nude cult in Europe and so contained nude photographs. Even the law says that nudity is not necessarily obscene, but instead of trying to argue with people of that

mental calibre, the best thing is to accept it as one would a stone falling on one's head.

Trials for obscenity are always very amusing. A plain-clothes policeman once arrested two press reporters in Paris who were looking at a card and laughing at the design on it. The card proved to be the permit issued to reporters by the Senate, but the design included a nude female and that was enough.

It seems a picture or a passage permitted in one place is not permissible in another. Pictures *exhibited* in a picture-gallery become obscene when printed in a book. A magistrate even remarked that if somebody found sufficient courage to reproduce certain passages from the Bible, he would be convicted of obscenity.

A Paris publisher once thought it proper to omit certain pages from a book because he thought they might offend some prudish readers, but announced that those pages would be supplied free of charge to any reader who wanted them. A reader in Belgium asked for those pages and then complained to the authorities that his modesty was offended. They informed the French authorities and the publisher was fined and copies of the book destroyed. So much for his scruples. If he had simply published the book including everything, it would probably have passed unnoticed like so many others.

An eminent French advocate once said : "I challenge anybody to give a definition of 'outrage of modesty' in literary matters. A reader who is compelled to read a book which shocks him may consider himself outraged. But who compels him? Very often it is the publicity given to a book by a prosecution that incites people to

read it." It is the prosecution therefore that is guilty of obscenity.

People with the nebulous mentality of the legislators who made these laws cannot be expected to be consistent. There is for instance in Paris a 'National School of Fine Arts' conducted by the State. All artists go to that school and when a young man goes there, he is obliged to sketch nude women from life. They pose there, at a few feet from him, and he is ordered to copy all the lines of the figure which is declared obscene elsewhere, for instance in a theatre. Suppose one of these young men really feels a horror of nudity as pseudo-moralists would have him feel, what will happen? If he refuses to paint the nude, he will simply be asked to go away. That school is not for him. There the State pays models to undress in public, but if an actress does the same, she is sent to jail. Are these legislators in full possession of their mental faculties?

History amply proves that the greatest epochs were those in which sexuality was intense. It would seem that it is an essential accompaniment of a productive brain, as is shown by a study of the greatest geniuses of the world.

What is the actual result of these laws? As soon as a book is proscribed, there is an enormous demand for it. When Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant were prosecuted for an alleged 'obscene' pamphlet, they sold lacs of copies during the trial. After the 'well of loneliness' was declared obscene, copies were sold in France at exorbitant prices, and the buyers are disappointed, because there is nothing obscene in that book. The laws are thus pernicious, foolish and impossible to be applied equitably. The only thing to do with them is to repeal them. The moral

question is obscured by religious and other prejudices. "Do not harm your neighbour" is the only universal moral law. Everything else ought to be permissible. The only law in the matter of obscenity therefore ought to be that there is no such thing. Of course publishers and producers of plays etc. should not be allowed to cheat the public about the quality of their productions, so that the people who do not like licentious plays may not be obliged to see them. The announcement should plainly indicate the nature of a spectacle or book or anything else. If at all there is any such thing as obscenity, it cannot be prevented, since the effect of any law against it is to encourage it. What is the use of a law which does all harm and no good?

But how is the law to be changed? Before direct action in the Legislatures is possible, public opinion has to be formed. The World League for Sexual Reform, as we have seen, has made this one of the planks in its platform. I am a member

of the League, but I had started work even before the League was started. I have been conducting a monthly in Marathi for some years for the propagation of radical ideas on sex. The offended orthodoxy of Poona have been approaching Government with complaints, asking that the journal should be stopped. Now there is no law preventing people from expressing radical views, so the only way in which Government can take action against me is by a prosecution for obscenity, and provided a magistrate is found who will call it obscene, orthodoxy will be satisfied (This prediction has since been fulfilled). But this is much more than a personal issue. It is a challenge to common sense. Are we going to tolerate a law of this kind which is a shame to any legislators? If we are, we do not deserve to be called human beings, but vertical animals, as La Bruyere would call us.

R. D. KARVE.

A STRING OF PEARLS.

Eve was very proud of her pearls. She exhibited them on all possible occasions, at the Taj, at the Club, everywhere, continually boasting of their great value. Her friends were consequently much impressed and talked with bated breath about Eve's pearls. As is not unnatural, Eve one day got married, and as is equally natural, her husband had a brother. This brother could not stand "this pearl-fuss" and said to her: "They are worth about six pice; what do you want to make such a fuss about them for?" Eve was most indignant. "They belonged to my mother and to her mother before that.

My mother has many times had them valued and she assures me they have been handed down for generations. Of course they are genuine pearls, and worth thousands. Do you dare assume my mother, and all others who say so, are liars?"

"Don't let us quarrel about it," replied this reprobate of a brother-in-law. "The truth is easily proved. Let us go to an expert, who will test them and settle the matter."

"What?" snapped Eve. "Certainly not. I should not believe his tests even if they were true. I preferred to believe

in the tradition of my ancestors. Besides, if your expert did succeed in convincing me that pearls were valueless, it would break my heart." "If that is so and it makes you happy, go on believing in your pearls. But remember this, no amount of belief will ever change spurious stones into genuine ones!"

Are you like Eve? Do you refuse to put your religious beliefs to the test, lest you should find them disproved? If so, it may be necessary for your happiness to go on believing. But remember this—no matter how sincerely you desire it, your belief cannot convert myths into truths.

It is hardly a parallel case, however. Eve's self-deception cannot result in any harm to humanity at large; while religious beliefs throughout the ages have bred an incalculable amount of hate, revenge and resulted in endless cruelty and misery. History proves it. Not one of us is in a position to state, with any degree of confidence, that a Supreme Being exists. But what we *do* know is that such a Being would have no need of our praise or

admiration, seeing the mess the world is in and the misery that is around us. Let us devote our energies, our love, our admiration, to our fellow creatures, who we *know* can appreciate them and need them most.

While it is utterly futile to expect the course of nature to be diverted by prayer or belief in a Supreme Being, there is, on the other hand, no limit to the good things that human endeavour may accomplish.

If you have no illusions, express the truth fearlessly as you *know* it. To do it otherwise is to be intellectually dishonest.

It is a good thing that men, women and children, should be led to think rationally, clearly, fearlessly, about All problems.

Don't let the quicksands of tradition and the "what-was-good-for-my-mother-and-father-is-good-for-me" argument suck you in. Strike out—think for yourself! Get out of the rut? Progress is never stationary.

D. R. D. WADIA.

IT PAYS TO BE A SADHU.

The simple life of the Sadhu is often a mere pretence, as will be seen from the following particulars about the Upasani Maharaj, as given by a Baroda paper.

"The famous Upasani Maharaj of Sakori is now here and crowds of men, women and children are teeming to see him. This Sadhu has established himself at Sakori for the last 15 years. He used to have two wives, and when they died, he took to this kind of life. He is about 65 years of age and his health is

good, except that in summer he suffers from piles (the religious life is no good for that, apparently). He is always naked and has only a piece of gunny-cloth (the writer does not say how he uses this). The Maharaj has followers all over Maharashtra. One of these, a barrister, made him a present of his daughter of 16, another of a girl of 10, and a third gave his wife aged 22. At present in Baroda, he has two tonsured widows with him, about 14 to 20 years of

age. One can see from this how devoted his followers are, since they are even willing to give up to him such valuable pieces of property as daughters and wives!

At Sakori, there is prayer in the Math three times a day, and after the afternoon and evening prayers, about a dozen girls and women sing and dance in imitation of Krishna and Gopis (of course this is all spiritual, otherwise it would be obscene). Men are only allowed to see the Maharaj at certain fixed hours, but women can enter any time at pleasure! On the Makara-Sankranti day, the Maharaj wears female dress and is worshipped in that state and receives presents from all women present. About 400 to 500 men and women attend this ceremony and the Maharaj gets Rs. 8 to 10,000. On another day called Guru-Purnima, he gets ten to fifteen thousand rupees. On one such day, Raja Kisen Prasad, the Dewan of Hyderabad sent him a silver frame-work weighing about four maunds. A married lady sits by his side during the ceremony and is worshipped before him.

All money transactions on behalf of the Sadhu are looked after by a widow who has been with him for some years. Lands worth Rs. 11,000 have been bought in her name at Sakori and some more to build houses for her sons. They are at Nasik and Rs. 100 are sent every month for their expenses.

The Maharaj possesses moveable and immoveable property valued at more than two lacs of rupees. Nobody knows definitely who his heir will be. No supernatural feats are attributed to him. He must have made a large profit in Baroda. There is no depression in this profession which depends on the gullibility of religious Hindus."

Followers of Sadhus include so-called educated people, barristers, solicitors, doctors etc. One pities the clients whose cases are entrusted to such men. Dr. Robinson rightly says: "A bank president who goes to consult Evangeline Adams or some such fakirs and fakiresses ought to be deprived of his position and given the job of a bootblack. A position should correspond to a person's intelligence. Is it any wonder that we have so many bank failures when so many of our bank presidents are just morons? The idea of bank officials and politicians consulting astrologers, necromancers, fortune tellers, numerologists etc.' And they laugh at the superstitions of the African Hottentots." I have known of Superintendents of schools in Bombay consulting astrologers as to which pupils would pass at the Matriculation, so as to send only those and obtain a cent per cent result!

R. D.

THE CHURCH AND POLITICS.

The introduction of religion into the political field is always more or less disastrous. In Roman Catholic countries the rule of the priest is avowed and obvious, and its evils are apparent to everyone—but the priest. In our own country the rule of the priest is unavowed, but it is there in an insidious and hypocritical form. It is not so obvious—to those who do not wish to see it, but its power is confessed by the efforts made by individuals and parties to avoid rousing its antagonism. In municipal life the organized vote of Church and Chapel, while not so decisive as it was a couple of generations ago, is still too powerful for candidates for office to risk offending. And this Protestant vote is used very much as the Roman Catholic vote is used. Let the issue raised touch religion, and voters are urged to act as *Christians* in the interests of the maintenance of religious privilege or sectarian power. The Roman Church meets disobedience with excommunication inside the Church, and outside with whatever secular pressure it is able to use. The Protestant Church is not able to excommunicate, but it has the powerful weapon of business and social boycott, and it uses them with as little compunction as the elder Church wields its spiritual powers. The result is a mass of insincerity, hypocrisy, and humbug that effects every branch of public life. The position of Lord Strickland is humiliating enough in all truth. But he is at least acting under pressure openly applied, and so far is illustrating the position laid down by Hilaire Belloc, and when the Church has said what is right it is a matter of no consequence what one's own intellectual convictions may be. But I

am sure that submission to a mental tyranny openly exercised is in the end far less demoralizing to character than is the concealed tyranny of religion in this country.

* * *

Religion and Life.

Is there a single instance in which religion has been permitted to operate in the political or social life of the people of this country, where that influence can be said to have made for public good. I do not know of one. Lecky has pointed out that wherever it is possible to trace the influence of Canon Law on the criminal law of this or of any other country the influence has been wholly in the wrong direction. It has encouraged torture and brutalization and has steadily fought against the rational treatment of the criminal. Church law and religious teaching has, again, been mainly responsible for the opposition to the legal equality of the sexes. Woman was created subject to man, and subject to man she must remain. It is only as religious prejudice has been weakened that she has gained the freedom she possesses to-day. And even now there is less freedom in the Churches for women than exist elsewhere. In the laws regulating marriage and divorce, and in divorce, and in the development of the birth-control movement the same generalization holds good. So far as religion has exerted an influence it has been in the wrong direction. Even in the case of war there is the same tale to tell. Religion has never failed to furnish a moral justification for the perpetuation of the narrower forms of nationalism and for any and every war that has occurred.

When the quarrel between Lord Strickland and the Maltese bishops was at its height some of the religious papers in this country protested against the Catholic Church interfering in the politics of the people of Malta. Well, look at the Sunday question! Here is a question that owes its existence entirely to the demand of the Churches to control at least one seventh of the life of every man, and not merely claims this, but actually compels the Government of the day to enforce some measure of its decrees. No one can pretend that even the present Government would have produced the present Sunday Bill had it not been for religious pressure. No one can claim that, Sir Herbert Samuel for instance, really believed all he said and did when he moved the second reading of the Bill. He is a man of intelligence, and his speech was too much that of a clever advocate making out a case for a client in whom he had no real faith. No one can reasonably claim that Sunday freedom has ever been the cause of anything but good, and it is easy to prove that we owe many ugly features of English life to Sabbatarian legislation. The whole case here, for the Sabbatarians, is a purely religious one. It is an attempt of religious organizations to dominate the secular State and the measure of its success is seen in the Sunday Entertainments Bill, 1932.

In the maintenance of the Blasphemy Laws we have, again, a manifestation of the intrusion of religion into politics. The only justification for a specific law against blasphemy is religious belief. It is not possible, or even conceivable to make out a case for its existence otherwise. And yet we have seen recently the spectacle of a Labour Government, of which many of the members were non-believers in religion, actually declining to permit the repeal of the existing Blasphemy Laws unless a new blasphemy law

was created in their stead. If the abject surrender of Lord Strickland to the Roman Church is discreditable, what are we to make of the Imperial Parliament's surrender time after time to the noisy clamour of the least enlightened sections of the community?

The truth is that what the Roman Church is doing every other Church would like to do; what the Roman Church openly claims, every other is bound to claim by implication. It is useless expecting an established religion to steer clear of politics, it must aim at justifying its existence and, particularly in modern circumstances, it can only do so by furnishing a utilitarian reason. It must aim at the control of education, it must try to influence legislation so that its claims are protected. The Roman Church has never ceased to make the claim that it is independent of and superior to the secular power, and it has never ceased to make it clear that when it submits to dictation from the secular power it does so under protest, and without any diminution of its original affirmation. The other Churches, particularly in this country, are not so straightforward in their claims, but they are implied nevertheless. In action they seal their objects under a regard for social betterment, concern for morality, for anything and everything, except the real thing and the only thing about which they are concerned. The Protestant Church is not substantially different from the Roman Church, it is merely less open in its action. It is just possible that the Strickland affair may open the eyes of some to the essential issue. I do not know. Human stupidity is hard to overcome, and in that fact lies the real hope for the Christian Church.

CHAPMAN COHEN,
in "The Free Thinker."

SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.

The trouble about sex education is a wholly artificial one. Parents have taught themselves to feel that the matter is a difficult one to speak about, and many of them object if it is dealt with on the right lines by teachers. On the subject of sex most people, owing to Christianity, are more or less insane. For some people, there is no difficulty whatever about sex instruction; children's questions on sex are answered simply and directly with whatever degree of fullness the children desire. All that is necessary is known before puberty while it still has little emotional significance.

But for schoolmasters and schoolmistresses confronted with the children of conventional parents, the matter is more difficult. It is thought that information on sex ought not to be conveyed until it is necessary in order to avoid what are called "dangers," and it is thought that none of it should consist of honest, straightforward, accurate facts, but of twistings and distortions designed to have what is regarded as a wholesome moral influence. Schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, owing to conventional ethics, are usually either hypocrites or persons who have practised an unnatural restraint; they are, therefore, not the best people to give a straightforward and matter-of-fact account of sex. So long as such a fuss is made about the matter, it would be probably be better to have the instruction given by medical men or women rather than by the teachers.

It is a mistake to suppose that in giving sex instruction one should start from the loves of the flowers, passing through the innocent gambols of crabs and the slightly less innocent passions of dogs to the

behaviour of the children's parents, which the children would by this time have come to think of as something that needs a very elaborate and lengthy apology. The proper course is to begin with the growth of the child in the mother, and then to explain what strikes every boy and girl as mysterious first, how the child gets out, and then how it gets in. The whole thing should be treated in exactly as matter-of-fact a manner as if you were explaining how the soda-water gets into a syphon.

If it is thought essential moral instruction should be combined with sex information, let care be taken that the statements made with a moral purpose are true. It is customary, for example, to threaten all kinds of dire consequences from masturbation, which every well-informed person knows to be rubbish. If the truth is not sufficient to promote the conduct which you think moral, you had better alter your views as to what constitutes morality, for a morality which needs lies to support it cannot be valid.

When children have reached the age of adolescence without having any instruction from adults on the subject of sex, they will, in the great majority of cases, have a fragmentary and secret knowledge derived from other children. In this case the teacher has to combat the already acquired conviction that sex is comic and furtive, and a subject for sniggering. Conventional moralists, one must suppose, desire the young to take this view of sex, since they must know through recollections of their own youth that this is the view which results from an adult policy of silence. It is impossible to combat this view by talk about sacred and serious

functions or the creative purposes of nature, or other such fine phrases. The only way to combat it is by scientific straightforwardness. I do not think a great deal of instruction is required. Three talks from a doctor should suffice: the first on gestation, the second on child-birth, and the third on the male part in procreation. After that there should be access to scientific books containing full information. Apart from formal instruction, however, it is very important that young people should be able to talk free-

ly about their sexual problems and perplexities, and it is absolutely essential that those adults with whom they talk should be leading a full normal and satisfactory sex life. Such persons are at present considered by the education authorities unfit to have contact with children. This view of the education authorities must be combatted with all possible vigour.

BERTRAND RUSSEL,
in "The New Generation"

AT THE SECRETARIES' TABLE.

The following have joined our Association :—

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REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hon'y. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

Tap Religious Endowments.

Sir P. Thakurdas opening an orphanage for Hindu girls at Santacruz congratulated the Trustees for the use they made of the money and mentioned of the many charities about which we hear so little. Princely charities have supplied Bombay with a large number of its public institutions. But there is a lot more that

can yet be done if all the wealth that has been endowed is properly managed. I have in mind, especially, the enormous sums of money that are collected in the temples not only in this city but all over India. The wealth of these temples is proverbial; so is also the way it is used. A greater portion of it lies buried as gold and silver coin, some

is wasted on gold ornaments and another fraction on feeding those parasites of society—the priests and sadhus. A great deal depends on the liberal-mindedness of the Trustees, but even their hands are tied. I understand the Trustees of certain temples in Bombay moved the High Court for permission to utilise the funds for education. But by a previous decision the Trustees are considered to be the protectors of the idols who are the minors, and the accumulated money can be spent only in ways that will improve the lot of these moulds of metal or clay. Hence clothes, gold ornaments, ornamental cars, decorations of the temple and music that is deafening to human ears are the only items on which the revenues could be legally spent. Education can be of no use to the idol, for, by itself it cannot learn, and the god whom it represents in heaven is himself a fountain of knowledge. On the contrary, it will be hostile to the interests of the idol, for with the spread of knowledge among the devotees, revolution will gain ground and very soon these ‘houses of gods’ will be converted into more useful institutions. The misfortune of it is that the law as it now stands, both through enactments and other previous decisions of the High Courts, tie down the hands of the judges. This is the great drawback of the administration of law; a judge cannot decide an issue solely on the present conditions but will have to judge in accordance with what has been said before. Our legislators who have their eye on the popular vote, do nothing. Yet there is a growing restlessness at this colossal waste of good money, and taking a leaf from history one can be confident that the avalanche of public opinion will soon gather sufficient momentum to break the

safes of these idols, and distribute the money for a better purpose.

* * * *

Death-bed Conversions.

In one of the previous issues, Dr. D'Avoine wrote a very interesting article on the attitude of believers towards non-believers in Bombay. What he said is applicable not only to this city but to other parts of the world wherever such sections of thought exist. Believers assume an attitude either of contempt or of pity towards unbelievers. Should a Holy Inquisition be instituted again, those that look upon us with contempt and anger will form the rabble that will jeeringly follow us to the stake. From amongst the second group we will probably find our judges who condemn us only for the sake of our “souls.” At the moment, the latter are inclined to pray for our conversion. Most of them hold high hopes of death-bed conversions and only has only to talk with these believers for half an hour when you will be told of innumerable “Scoffers at God” who at the moment of death sincerely repented for their folly and were received into Paradise! There is certainly a great deal of truth in this, even after making liberal allowances for the one-sided reports based on the most slender of evidences. The reason for this is very simple. Quite a number of Rationalists are not Rationalists at all. They have given up religion because they find it an inconvenience, and because they are too lazy. With a certain amount of independence that accrues with age and economic stability, these persons find they can have a long rope. But all those fears about punishment in the next world, of God's slow, secret but certain vengeance even in this world, are there within them. They have not had the leisure nor the

talent probably, to study the principles of religious teaching and satisfy themselves one way or the other. They have taken the path of least resistance and perhaps moving in a mutual-admiration society have been pocket editions of the hero of the group. Therefore, when at the moment of death, a moment about which much has been written but the least verified, all sorts of fears come in, it is natural that a person would not be foolhardy to gamble away his eternity, an eternity in which he still believes. It is really not necessary to wait for the *moment of death*. *Some weeks back, I met a gentleman past fifty, who told me that in his younger days he was an atheist, but now with age he has lost his courage and considers illness to be sent by a non-propitiated deity. He is inclined to be orthodox, at least as far as ritual is concerned, and does not hesitate to seek bodily relief through the ministrations of paid servants of God. It will not surprise me, nor you I expect, to hear his name being thrown at us as one who, a staunch atheist once, has now become a confirmed Theist. I told him that his Atheism could not have been a matter of conviction, because convictions can remain with age. There are others who serve God only to serve Mammon. Though Rationalists in younger days, yet as they ascend the ladder of civic success, they find they have to temper their language, and whenever a public condemnation is called for from them, maintain a sphinx-like silence, only to safeguard their public position. With time they become lax in their principles, and think nothing of participating in ritual. This is one more big group of later-life conversions. The lesson for all of us is that we should be Rationalists only by conviction, and by conviction alone. We should attain the mental salvation through study and knowledge. Then death loses his sting of fear and eternity its value for us.*

We can then face death as any other incident in our life. And is not this the *most rational way of looking at it?*

* * *

Youth gropes for freedom.

The other day I was told of an unusual incident. A young lady, considered the belle of the college, who had resisted many a charming young man both within and outside college, suddenly went and lived with an oldish man past fifty. The romance did not last long. She rejoined college. Her colleagues and friends talked of her before and discussed her again. To the puritanical she was only a prostitute, while the others were stunned at the courage of the girl. The only thing new about this is that, that she does it openly, keeps up to it for some time, and has the "impudence" to assume normal life soon after. Flirtations in the college are very well known and the political activities have increased the opportunities, which are not neglected. Romance ending in sexual life is neither unknown, though it is always clandestine. When practised openly, no girl would go back to her college. The incident mentioned above gives us a foretaste of what is coming. Early marriages removed the lid off the desire for sex, but college education has postponed marriage, and has brought repression as a necessary evil. Any intimacy between boys and girls is still uncounatenanced in Hindu homes. The college hours offer the best opportunity. Even there sexual desire can be only sublimated in "intellectual talk" on sex and sexual behaviour. *Every bookseller is full of books on sex and marriage and they are all well read. Cinema and Western novels do not attach any odium to such a romantic episode, and even if that was the original desire, it has failed in its object because such episodes are so common that one thinks that without them life would not be interesting. The modern college girls and boys are fir-*

ed by the ideas in western novels and pictures and the more courageous amongst them attempt to put them into practice. To a boy the practice is more difficult because of money. This handicap does not exist for a girl because, so long as she has charm and desire, she can always choose the economically sound man from among the crowd of her admirers and retain him as long as she likes. As in other things, we are progressing also in this aspect of life. Some years back we had no co-education; later boys and girls were dismissed from college if they were intimate; still later, flirting at first clandestine and later public was permitted and college students of both sexes could have their holidays together and lastly we are coming to the phase of the present incident. It is a phase that will evolve onwards. The college student has of late played a very important part in China, in Italy, in Argentine, in Germany and in India as well. We see around us signs of the old dipping in salute to the new. This incident may be the next step, the spear-point of the next drive.

It is right or wrong? The usual question again. But the answer is different every time. I do not see why it should be wrong for two persons who very much desire for each other's company to have as much of it as they can conveniently manage. Neither has Mr. A who is now very friendly with Miss B any right to condemn her, because at one time she felt she liked Mr. C well enough to live with him, so long as she does not entertain the same feeling now. This is frankly impossible because if she did so she would not have got near Mr. A. I say Mr. A because it is only men that have such arrogance. As I wrote before, I do not hold sex sacrosanct. I feel it should come floating on the flood-tide of friendship and then it is a different sensation. What this flood-tide of friendship means will depend on individuals. Some might

feel it at the height of what in retrospect seems a weak moment of infatuation; to others it might come out of the enthusiasm and strength of a well-tryed friendship. To the former, the episode will be a matter of regret and shame and disappointment; to the latter it will be one of joy, pride and fulfillment.

* * *

The communal question.

The country is disturbed over the communal award. To a large number it is a disappointment, because it tends to perpetuate that which it ought to attempt to destroy. Our communities are entirely religious. Hence it is next to impossible to do away with them in private lives except by intermarriages. Within the last two years there have been a good few. Of the communities that intermarry, the Parsis hold an important place. But so far this intermarrying has been limited to the male members. Recently however the ladies have taken up the game and this has alarmed the orthodox members of the community. Some of the latter have taken the law in their own hands and have gone to the extent of molesting the young ladies in question. There is a rumour that a meeting of the Parsee Panchayat is shortly to be called to consider this question. Remembering that at the last Panchayat elections the reformers were routed, it is useless to expect the orthodox section to support these intercommunal marriages. But what about those Parsi men who have made their lives happy by marrying non-Parseees in the teeth of all opposition. Are they not going to band together and protect and encourage these ladies who are setting a splendid example to the rest of the country? In arranging marriage unions, caution and conservatism are at a premium. These young ladies are reformers in reality and deserve the support of every progressive-minded man and woman.

ALI AKBAR.

RAMAN AND PARANJPYE ON EDUCATION IN INDIA.

Among eminent men in India one seldom comes across such out-spoken and fearless men like Professor Sir C. V. Raman and Dr. R. P. Paranjpye. The latter, in his "The Crux of Indian Problem", tells us that religion and superstitions are the causes of most of the troubles in India—a sentiment with which we are in full agreement. Dr. Paranjpye gives us an idea of the exaggerated importance people in this country attach to religious authorities, of the energy and activity wasted in religious exercises, and of the considerable sum of money spent every year on senseless and meaningless ceremonies, on the upkeep of innumerable "houses of God," and on the maintenance of countless "religious" parasites. He traces most of the social and political differences which divide so sharply the different communities of India to religion and he blames a defective system of education imparted in this country for the perpetuation of the conditions we see round us. Among other things, Dr. Paranjpye rightly condemns the missionary schools as centres which encourage communal ideas and set up barriers among communities. The education one receives in those schools is moreover on purely sectarian lines which greatly encourages bigotry and creates in their alumni a narrow mental outlook which generally persists throughout life. The so-called modern education which they are believed to impart is of a perfunctory nature just to enable the students to pass their examinations and little importance is attached to the acquirement of real and lasting knowledge.

Though the aims of these missionary schools are undoubtedly to proselytise, they also carry out social works such as medical relief, etc. Through these means principally are these schools held in high estimation by many who are fascinated by such inducement and forget the real object of such institutions.

Needless to say that the candid opinion of a distinguished and experienced educationist as Dr. Paranjpye on a matter of such grave importance to the country, has been received with mixed feelings. Obscurantists are up in arms against him and already an outcry has been raised in "The Times of India" that the learned doctor is a Rationalist who has a poor idea of the questions he deals with in his book; that he is biassed against religion; that he cannot discern things "spiritual" and so ought not to interfere with traditions and the religious beliefs of his countrymen; that he is inconsistent and ought to refrain from writing books! Dr. Paranjpye, doubtless, was prepared to hear such criticisms of his book. In India many educated persons sincerely believe that religion and the superstitions associated with it are of prime necessity to the people of this country without which they would be wretched and unhappy. I am convinced that such people honestly and sincerely believe that without some beliefs or other people are bound to go astray and lead a wild life. This, of course, is a fallacy, a gratuitous assumption that is not based on facts, for it is clear that people who reject false beliefs and superstitions have already replaced these by saner views and ideas not likely

to mislead them. Such people, who are generally superficial and thoughtless, will always croak at any one who attacks religion and "cherished beliefs". There are many others, however, who have no such sincerity to justify their attitude. On the contrary, they are, most of them, sceptics and cynics of the first water who pretend that they are horrified when any body ventures to attack popular religious beliefs. These people are no more than those astute and egoistical individuals who have recognized long ago that the ignorance of the masses and the perpetuation of superstitions and irrational beliefs are the best safe-guards against intellectual emancipation which alone can raise man to the dignity of manhood, and equip him to free himself from any kind of domination. Such people are the avowed enemies of Rationalism; they will continue to do their best to misrepresent, sneer and gibe at it. For them any belief is better than none at all so long as it can render people besotted enough to imagine that their childish beliefs are the most cherished things they possess without which they will perish! "The Times of India" must be praised for allowing in its columns a free discussion on Rationalism in connection with Dr. Paranjpye's book. It is seldom that Rationalists here are given such opportunities and it speaks well for the liberality of "The Times" for which we, Rationalists, are, indeed, grateful. Sir C. V. Raman, in the address which he recently delivered at the Convocation of the Bombay University, was even more outspoken. He deplored the neglect of the study of science in India, the little encouragement given to it by educational bodies and the antiquated system of education encouraged by the Universities. He said that the present system only encouraged scholasticism

which aims at book knowledge and neglects research, true scholarship and independence of thought. Who but those who do not know how people in this country worship academical titles, degrees and diplomas, will deny that Sir C. V. Raman spoke nothing but the truth in ascribing this peculiar mental characteristic of the Indians to their training in pure scholasticism? Professor Raman went further than this in his indictment. He truly said that the present education in India is under the control of vested interests who want to mould men into "docile, tractable and obedient copy writers." "Education", he said, "has been too long the stronghold of conservatism. Go to any seat of education and whom do you find there in high places? Not men of Science. Our centres of learning are being controlled by politicians, Government nominees, lawyers and priests. Our education is determined not by the needs of our race but by vested interests. It is controlled by those who would create a "docile, tractable and obedient army of copy writers". "We want today," said the learned professor, "a revolution in the methods of education". He would like to see "that Science is the fundamental basis of education and should be taught from childhood". He then went on to explain how Science has changed the outlook of things in general since the last two hundred years. He instanced the subject of human origin as a case in point and remarked that on this matter most people were satisfied with what their religion told them. "There were", he said, "numerous other sciences which were regarded as mere luxuries". The professor rightly considers that the study of Science affords a wide field for the development of the human intellect.

There is nothing to wonder at this as the Indian system of education is based on that of England and we know that Science is still a Cinderella subject in that country, for the very reason that education there is mostly under the control of the Clergy. India slavishly copies absurdities from England other than mere educational systems. Only a few days ago, a magistrate in Bombay gravely objected to lawyers appearing before him except in black! It would be considered an awful lapse, an unheard-of calamity and an unpardonable offence if a judge, in this hot and stuffy climate were to dispense with the ridiculous wig and gown that are supposed to impress simpletons with the dignity of the law. Professor Raman was right when he pointed out that even in the matter of academical gowns India must needs copy London, Cambridge and Oxford.

It is seldom that an eminent man has spoken so frankly and courageously at such a function as a University Convocation. No real progress can be made in education so long as priests, lawyers, and others who have not been trained in science control education. Thirty years ago Professor Haeckel, in the "Riddle of the Universe", lamented that the same thing obtained in Germany and he exhorted people to take more interest in science.

There is no doubt that many will consider Sir C. V. Raman's lecture to be most unconventional and they must be sorely displeased with it. This must be expected. Already silly criticism of it is appearing in the press, none more so than the idiotic effusion of Dr. Nunan "Science has proved nothing" in "The Times of India" a few days ago. I am really sorry for Dr. Nunan as Mr. F.

W. Wilson said of him two years ago, that he was the only sane man in Bombay. There is one point in Professor Raman's address with which I am not in complete agreement. He seemed to have singled out the M. B., B. S. and B. Sc. graduates as the only ones among those present that evening who have had a scientific training. This must be taken cautiously. The B. Sc. graduates certainly receive a liberal dose of Science which is sufficient to kindle in them an interest in it and help the development of the intellect. The M. B., B. S. graduates are not so trained. Even the elementary biology, chemistry, physics, bacteriology, which form part of their curriculum are taught in the perfunctory manner above mentioned which simply enables them to pass the necessary examinations. Imagine our Indian Medical graduates whose function in life will be to deal with life, having but a scanty knowledge of Biology—the Science of Life! Apart from a smattering knowledge enough to enable them to pass an examination, the subject is generally Greek to them. They have not the slightest idea how the theory of Evolution (which has revolutionized thought so much) is demonstrated by Biology. No effort is made to make the subject interesting and informing to these. When Professor Raman says that Science has changed our outlook on the Universe and things in general, one ought to remember that only the enlightened are so influenced by Science. The outlook of the majority on the problems with which Science is concerned is just the same as that of the semi-barbarous Hebrews and the Egyptians who lived there thousand years ago.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF LIFE.

While it may be true that Astronomy is the most poetical of Sciences, the great Science of Biology is certainly the most ancient. Indeed, before we proceed to consider this stupendous problem "The nature and origin of Life," it may be of interest to glance briefly towards the dawn of history and to note that early mankind—that is to say, primitive man, was already a biologist and made certain important distinctions which at a much later stage produced the various groups of naturalists.

There is every reason to suppose that it was the external desire or interest to accumulate knowledge as to the nature and origin of life that prompted primitive man to examine the "bodies" of plants, of animals and of human beings. The empirical folk knowledge thus accumulated in the course of many thousands of years, as a result of the direct observation of nature, became classified even whilst it was collected and it may be regarded as the foundation of the early stages of the Science of Biology.

It seems that the Ancient Babylonians possessed an extensive knowledge of higher animal forms and of human anatomy, and had developed interesting theories of the functions of the various visceral organs.

In Ancient Egypt also, the Sacred animals were studied with minute care. The development of the Scarab was known, the metamorphosis of the frog and the fly had been carefully observed, and observations of various parasitic worms had been made. The Egyptian custom of embalming the dead led to a great deal of exact knowledge of the structure of the human body.

However, in spite of accumulation of facts in Egypt and Babylon it is to Greece that we must turn for the earliest attempts to organize such knowledge in a systematic form. Hippocrates (460–377 B.C.) discarded magical theories of disease and Aristotle (b. 384. B. C.) originated scientific classification. We are told that Aristotle was acquainted with over 500 forms, as classified by modern Zoologists.

He was the founder of Comparative Anatomy, and his chief interests were anatomical and morphological. His great disciple Theophrastus paid, it seems, special attention to the botanical side of Biology, doing for Botany, what Aristotle had done for Zoology.

The influence of Aristotle and his immediate successor largely led to the development of the great school of Medical study of Alexandria under the Ptolemies where biology was studied, with anatomy and physiology. In the first century of the Christian era, the Roman Pliny compiled his *Natural History* from a number of sources, a work which made him after Aristotle the most influential of the biologists of classical antiquity. Galen (b. A. D. 131) stood on the borderland between antiquity and the middle ages. Galen began the study of the component parts of the living organism. He recognised the difference between sensory and motor nerves; he described the heart and blood vessels in detail, and studied the process of respiration. Throughout the dark period called the Middle Ages, no progress whatsoever was made with the study of Biology, and Galen's work remained unquestioned until Harvey established the fact of the circulation of blood.

In the 16th century, however, enormous fresh work was begun which has lasted to this day. Such briefly is the history of the rise of Biology from ancient times to the end of the Middle ages. The immediate problem before us is to study as briefly as possible, what great thinkers and scientists have to tell us about the origin of life, as a result of researches that have been made from the 16th century to the present day, and conclusions, if any, that have been reached.

Until recently, though the mass of mankind believed that life owed its origin to an "Act of Creation", by a "Divine Being", men were nevertheless ready to believe that living organisms could be spontaneously generated from dead or inorganic matter. Vinegar, for example, if left alone might generate eels. Flies and lice might develop from dust. Bees might be formed inside the carcase of an animal, etc. Men who hesitated to believe in these alleged phenomena might nevertheless believe that micro-organisms might spontaneously be generated in various infusions as that of hay, etc, etc. But though these beliefs are no longer held and though it is not seriously doubted that existing organisms are the products of previously existing organisms, two questions constantly arise.

Lord Kelvin once suggested that life was brought to this planet by meteorites. This is not, however, a speculation about the "Origin of Life" which we are discussing; it deals merely with its transmission within the universe, and says

nothing at all about its ultimate origin. Sir Oliver Lodge and a multitude of other scientists and philosophers hold the belief that there exists somewhere "beyond the stars" a "vast reservoir of Life" by which this Earth is perpetually replenished. But all this even if true, essentially, merely alters a little the question from—"How did life originate on Earth" to "How did life originate in the Universe".

Preyer suggested that "the law of the Conservation of Energy and of Matter extends also to life, and that it is as reasonable to believe that non-living matter has been evolved from living as to believe the contrary". Ray Lancaster took the view that—"living matter was evolved from non-living matter by gradual stages, and that the first protoplasm fed upon their ancestors". It will be seen that this view fits in well with the general theory of Evolution. It assumes that at some time in the Earth's history the conditions of heat, moisture etc. were such as to allow the formation of highly complex chemical compounds. Some immortals, like Huxley and Herbert Spencer, were much inclined to believe that "Biogenesis is now the rule" and that in all probability "the actual condition under which life was evolved in the past have disappeared with no likelihood of re-appearance." It may be of course that—"the conditions demanded for the development of life from inorganic materials are so complex, involving so many precisely adjusted factors that the

possibility of the situation occurring twice over either on earth or elsewhere in the universe is an incredibly remote one. Perhaps in so "unique a situation life began." In any case the conclusion we are driven to is that, the facts regarding the "Origin of Life" are little more advanced than they were to our primitive ancestors, in spite of real advances in the

field of Bio-chemistry etc. and we can only say that the Origin of Life remains a profound mystery, all forms proceeding as far as we know at present from previous forms; and that we have no scrap of evidence that any form of life is now being evolved from non-living material in our Universe.

J. D. JENKINS.

[Since it is agreed on all hands that our Earth was once in an incandescent state, it follows that Life could not have existed in that condition. This only became possible when conditions became favourable, namely, when the Globe had cooled down sufficiently to permit living beings to exist. The question then about the Origin of Life on this planet is simple enough: it must have begun by mere natural processes or it must have been supernaturally introduced. To admit the latter is to admit a miracle. Everything in nature points that life began on Earth as a simple process and the facts of Chemistry point that it was evolved out of non-living elements.

Ed. REASON.]

PARSI RELIGION.

SOME CANDID COMMENTS.

The Parsis are Indians. Chronologically they belong for a longer period to India than even the Musalmans. Why they migrated from Persia to India about 1,200 years ago is explained unhistorically by Parsi tradition. The tradition asserts that they sought the hospitable shores of India to escape persecution at home by the Moslem Arabs! The fact is that the Moslem Arabs did not treat the Zoroastrian Persians very harshly because, according to their Code, the Parsis are a People of the Book along with the Jews and Christians. They were, no doubt, very cruelly treated in Persia but not by the Arabs. The persecution came from those Persians who, for worldly gains, had adopted the invading Arab's

religion. The main cause for the rapid conversion of Zoroastrian Persia to Islam was the intolerable tyranny of the Mobed, or the priestly class which imposed on ordinary mortals endless regulations of "licit" and "illicit."

Since the advent of Reza Shah and before it, I have been endeavouring to attract the attention of the Persians to Indian Parsis and vice versa. It has been my lifelong object to bring the two Aryan nations closer together.

Unfortunately for the last two years, to be more exact from about September 1929, certain people, both Parsis and Persian Musalmans (or Moghals as they are wrongly called) have attempted to introduce the disturbing element of

religion into the movement. It is natural that the most bigoted but honest Parsis should long to see Persia once more paying homage to Zoroastrianism. But the majority of Persian Musalmans, with an eye to the Parsi capital, are agnostics at heart.

The original movement comprised only intimate social intercourse and establishment of closer commercial relations. It is a pleasure to find that the latter project is gaining ground.

In this paper I intend to examine some of the aspects of Zoroastrianism which is extolled as ethically preferable to Islam! When I showed that parts of what passes for Zoroastrianism are wholly unacceptable, my opponents have shifted their ground. It is now declared that their object is to reintroduce the Zoroastrian "ideals" in Persia!! I may at once say that there is nothing particular in the teachings of Zoroaster, so far as we know them, which distinguish them from the other or preceding faiths of the world. The moral triad of good thoughts, words and deeds is common, as I have demonstrated, to Buddhism and Brahmanism,

As to the position of woman under Zoroastrian domination, it was certainly not more enviable than that assigned to her by Islam. As a matter of fact, while Islam puts a check on the number of a man's legitimate wives, Zoroastrianism nowhere expressly condemns polygamy. Plurality of wives is recognised. Lord Ahura Mazda is a husband of several spouses, metaphorical, symbolical and actual! Wives appear to have been taken only for the purpose of begetting progeny. Extraordinary latitude is prescribed to a man to enable him to be the father of a son. Neoga is not unknown to Parsi theology.

In order to reintroduce Zoroastrianism or Zoroastrian "ideals," into Persia, or rather to propagate it all over the land, for there are still 10,000 Persian souls professing the faith of Zoroaster in to-day's Iran, the translation of the Avesta into Persian was undertaken at an enormous cost. I objected to the translation on the two-fold ground: first, that it was not from the original scriptures, and secondly that the parts translated are certainly not the word of Zoroaster. They are derogatory to the religion of the Prophet of Iran. They are humiliating to any professor of Monotheism.

Here are some of the proofs of my claim that the portion of the Avesta called the *Yeshts* is a travesty of the doctrine of Zoroaster, such as has survived to us.

The *Yeshts* are litanies composed in honour of various gods and godlings. They are largely of pre-Zoroastrian origin. Zoroaster rose just to supercede and suppress this plurality of questionable deities by proclaiming the ideal of One Creator. But when the Prophet died, the priestly class found that the reverence for these godlings was too far rooted in popular worship to be eradicated. Therefore, they put on the little divinities a veneer of Zoroastrianism and palmed them off on the masses as adherents of the system of Zoroaster.

I am not the first to lay bare this distortion of the faith of Zoroaster. The late K. R. Cama, the first Parsi Orientalist, pointed it out in the midst of persecution by the Parsi fanatics two generations ago. The dubious nature of these pretentious godlings has been exposed by Dastur Dr. Dhalla, M.A., Ph.D., the High Priest of the Parsis of Sind and Punjab than whom there does not exist to-day an

higher authority on the religion of Zoroaster.

"It is generally asserted", say Dr. Dhalla, "by Western scholars that Zoroaster's religion was a reform of the primitive faith of the Iranians. But the reform had not lasted long, owing to the counter-reformation that had followed the Prophet's death. This revived the religion that Zoroaster came to replace."

The *Haoma* ceremony corresponding to the *soma* ritual of the Hindus is an integral part of practical Zoroastrianism and yet it is nowhere mentioned in the Gathas or the hymns which are attributed to Zoroaster himself. The "Indo-Iranian divinities, Mithra, Verethraghna, and others occupy a most exalted place in the Avestan and subsequent periods. The Gathas of Zoroaster knew them not". These Yazatas or "worshipful-ones" are more malign entities than benevolent deities. They are a species of demons. For, "great as the benevolence of these celestial beings is, it is tarnished by their imprecations upon their careless votaries", who do not burn incense enough to them. The gods are jealous of each other. Tishtrya, for instance, complains that people do not sacrifice to him as much as they do to his rivals. Mithra, another godling, complains of man's occasional neglect, and is terrible when enraged (the ire of Shiva would naturally occur to the readers' mind.) Unless his wrath is appeased by abundant sacrifices, "he punishes his wretched victim mercilessly". It is only when fed to satiety with the blood of countless victims that these godlings are of service to unhappy humanity.

Worse humiliation for the devout is in store for him where Ahura Mazda, the Almighty Creator of the Universe solemnly invokes some of his creatures, the

Yazatas. He, the Lord of all, offers sacrifices to these minor divinities. He ask them for boon. He prays to Ardivi Sura. He supplicates the help of Mithra and the assistance of Vayu for favours which are ultimately granted. Vayu goes further. He claims that he is a benefactor of Ahura Mazda himself. In the later Avesta there is little of monotheism. A crass form of polytheism supervenes. Adoration is made as in Hinduism to every conceivable object. "The wood for the altar fire, the sacred twines, lines, words of the chapters of the Haptanghaiti, intellect, conscience, knowledge and even sleep," are worshipped.

Thus, the Creator and his creature, angel and man, "ceremonial implements and textual passages", all in turn are venerated, more out of dread than love, in scheme of an omnibus creed.

The religion of Zoroaster, as it is practised today in India, can be acceptable to no rational being, far less to the ingenious, astute and epicurian Irani. It represents the grossest form of fire-worship. None of its higher ceremonies can be performed without the administration of liberal application outside and generous doses inside of the urine of the sacred bull, which is maintained for the purpose in every fire-temple where ordinarily merciful death supervening surfeit on rich food denied to humans, relieved him from a life of celibacy and cruel confinement.

I am no advocate of Islam. To frankly confess my creed, I think that all religions have in the totality of their effect inflicted more harm on mankind than any benefits that they have bequeathed. It is for the honest among Persian Musalmans who may be attracted by calculated propaganda of Zoroastrian fanatics and the Persian Musalman hypocrites to ponder whether the religion as depicted above has any virtue or utility for this age and for any quarter of God's good earth.

G. K. N.

PLANT ATTRACTIONS.

On a bright day bees and butterflies busily hover about flowers. Birds of many kinds peck out fruits and seeds. Are the animals robbing the plant of its innocent attractions or do the plants intend to invite animal visitors?

Plants are sedentary. They use animal agents for conveyance at two periods of their life. Wages are paid in kind, food and shelter.

The first use of animals to plants is to enable the mixing of male and female elements which is necessary for setting seed. Pollen dust consists of small and round grains which are the male elements. They are produced in pollen-boxes (anthers). The female elements are produced in ovules hid in ovary. The only way by which the male element can reach the ovule is by a receptive spot (stigma) associated with the ovary. Hence to facilitate sex union pollen grains have to be carried from anther to stigma. Though anther and ovary occur in many cases in the same flowers, it is found in nature that crossing of flowers (of the same kind, of course) brings greater vigour to seed than close breeding. It is for this purpose of conveying pollen that insects are used by plants.

Insects are not altruistically bent to do this service to the plant. They have to be lured. Honey, shelter, colour, symmetry, fragrance are the attractions that plants develop. Small flowers are massed into conspicuous clusters. Night flowers are fragrant and white to be easily located. The insect goes to the flower and rests on the tempting platform provided by petals. Anther and stigma lie in the path, but to avoid close selfing (pollen

falling on the stigma of the same flower) they mature at different times. In an attempt to suck honey the insect pushes between the anthers and unconsciously gets dusted with pollen. After a brief sojourn the visitor goes to another flower where it might rub the dusted body against a mature stigma to which the grains stick.

The nature of attractions that a kind of flowers develop are suited to one kind of visitors. The insects themselves cannot visit another kind. Their lips are fused to form a tube, the proboscis, useful in sucking honey. The proboscis straightens in use and coils like a watch spring at rest. The length of proboscis varies with the kind of insect and only insects with the proper length can reach the nectar at the base of the petal-tube the depth of which varies with the kind of flower. By restricting the type of visitors the danger of sterility due to pollen falling on stigmas of other kind is avoided.

Animals also help plants to disperse seeds. Limitations of food and room greatly check the growth of seeds under the shade of mother plant. Migration is therefore of advantage and birds are used for the purpose. The impatient bird afraid of competition carries pulpy fruit. Far away from the plant, seeds are dropped after eating the fleshy rind. Even passage through the gut does not reduce the germinating capacity of seed.

The attractions that plants develop do not have any regard to human likes and dislikes. However, plants agreeable to human desires are bred under horticultural methods. Such plants have become spoilt children developing artificial delicacies but losing natural vigour. Garden

roses and bananas have lost the power to set seed which the wild varieties retain.

Palms and grasses use wind as their agent to carry pollen and seeds. They do not develop attractions but expose the flowers on long stalks to the wind. Wherever animals are employed they are mostly winged members of the kingdom, invertebrate insects and vertebrate birds.

The association of animals and plants in nature to mutual advantage remains a fact. The attractions of one are suited

to the habits and form of another. *BUT* it is yet to be known

whether the bee developed the proboscis because it has to suck nectar, or the honey of the flower and the proboscis of the bee developed independently in nature and they occur in association because one is suitable to the other.

It is likely that both are partly correct, but how far is the question.

G. RAMCHANDRA RAO.

THE SABBATH HYPOCRITES.

The World, and England in particular, is living through one of its greatest crises. Problems of immense importance face it on all sides and yet there seems ample time in Parliament to work on such unimportant questions, as for instance the breaking of the Sabbath by those who visit a Cinema or take part in games on that day.

On the other hand, calling it unimportant is perhaps wrong for it certainly is an infringement on the private life and liberty of every Englishman, and as such, assumes a greater importance than it would appear.

Those in charge of the country's morals, in other words, those so called guardians of the souls of the masses have suddenly awakened to the fact that the public morals are on the downward path, due to heaven alone knows what! And the first step to help in preventing this is to put a stop to people visiting Cinemas or playing games on Sundays!

The presumptuous high-handed manner in which these bigots are allowed to

interfere in other people's affairs is amazing. Unfortunately very few *have* the necessary courage or time to step in and show up this state of affairs which grows more annoying instead of lessening as we progress.

In England, as in other countries, if there is any insincere movement afoot, one can blindly bet that it is the Religious who are at the bottom of the movement.

Take for example this Sabbath Fuss.

The Religious Christians have suddenly found that visiting Cinemas and playing games on Sundays spoil the people's moral tone; so Cinemas should be closed and none should play games on Sundays. The politicians who have to depend on the public for their office, however silly the latter might be, pander to the public, and lend their support to all foolish and even liberty-destroying schemes. So much for honesty in Politics!

There is nothing that is rational about this new Bill in Parliament. But the religious clergy are apparently good busi-

ness men. They have no objection to Sunday performances if the profits go to charity and they consider the Church as the best receiver of such Charity.

If the Government considers that Sunday Cinema shows are ipsofacto immoral, it is shallow hypocrisy to excuse it by the fact that the profits go to Charity.

Zoos and museums may open unconditionally, cinemas conditionally, and theatres not at all. And yet we have a Home Secretary who by accepting such a high and responsible place in the management of a big State, prides himself on his logic defending such a differentiation so manifestly absurd. True followers of Jesus should give the left cheek when slapped on the right, but these Sabbatarians are strange people.

The Secretary of the Lords' Day Observance Society in a public statement declared that "We of the Sabbath cause are ready for a battle royal between ourselves and the Sabbath destroyers".

Yet when the last war was raging, one never heard a single word from these self-styled good, religious, moral people about thousands being slaughtered on Sundays as on other days. On the other hand it is a well known fact that the holy soldier man, the Army Chaplain, went the whole hog inciting the troops to kill more men than ever! A precept slightly different from what that good man in the Christian story got nailed for.

For these good people it is a sin to see a cinema or to go to a theatre on a Sunday, but the shooting and bayonetting of a fellow-man on a Sunday was doing "One's duty" and was conduct deserving the country's commendation. What admirable morality!

Then again when these good Christians could have done a good deed when the Children's Bill was before Parliament preventing the labour of children under 14 on Sundays, they declined to interfere or assist in preventing this desecration of the Sabbath. And the reason of their inconsistency is not far to seek. The employers of children under 14 are "hard boiled" magnates and the clergy feared that if they went against them, they would stop subscribing to Church Funds and such other activities. Therefore, whenever it is a question of the priest's pocket being touched, he would rather lie low and allow an injustice to pass. And these are the servants of God!

To think that such an important body as the Parliament has to deliberate on a liberty-destroying 17th Century Act when there are millions unemployed, the prosperity of the country on the ebb, the Indian question unsettled, and the world on the verge of bankruptcy, makes one give up all hope in our present civilization.

History teaches us that whenever the clergy have taken a prominent part in the country's politics, it has invariably got the front end of the boot,—Spain, Russia, France are recent examples.

It is true that this should be a lesson to the wise but priestly arrogance knows no bounds and its hide is of the thickest.

The arrogance of the clergy in England shows how necessary it is to be organised as Rationalists to combat effectively this beneficial influence.

D. R. D. WADIA.

AMONGST THE BELIEVERS.

THE WILL TO BELIEVE.

The stupidity of the Sadhu-ridden mind is unfathomable. The man who believes in a Sadhu is hypnotised out of his common sense, as the following story will show. It is from a magazine conducted by the followers of the late Sai-Baba of Sherdi. It is related by the Hon. Secretary of the Managing Committee of the Sadhu's estates. I have condensed it a little.

That gentleman had once in his pocket two packets, one small and one large, and he was under the impression that both contained sacred powder given by the Sadhu himself. He met a medical friend on the way, who was anxious to have some of this powder. So being generous, he thought of giving him the larger packet. He could not at the moment find it in his pocket, and was therefore obliged to give the small one. He found the larger one afterwards and found that it did not contain the sacred powder, but some other sacred thing.

A perfectly commonplace incident, but this gentleman finds a miracle in it. His idea is that the occult power of the late sadhu prevented him from finding the larger packet at the time, because it did not contain what he wanted to give and the medical friend would otherwise have been disappointed. It is not quite clear whether the sadhu merely guided his hand so that he should not be able to find it, or whether he actually made it disappear from his pocket for some time and replaced it when nobody was looking.

These people are evidently hunting for miracles and will find them anywhere, as people who are hunting for god find him too.

* * *

A POINT OF VIEW.

Under the caption 'A mathematician's views on Theism' a Marathi monthly, the organ of a small sub-caste, quotes the following anecdote from the Life of the late Mr. Annasaheb Patwardhan, whom his biographer calls a Brahmarshi (Brahmin sage). Mr. Patwardhan, so far as I know, was principally known for his medical abilities, though he had failed at the L. M. & S. examination and was more highly esteemed than other Vaidyas because he knew both systems. He was also somewhat of a Sadhu and some wonderful cures are attributed to him. He was supposed to diagnose a pregnancy at a mere glance even during the first fortnight! He was all the more popular as he did not charge any fees. The other gentleman in the story, Kerunana Chhatre, was known as a mathematician. The story runs thus:—

"Kerunana once came to Bombay and put up with Patwardhan as they were close friends and besides anybody coming from Poona used to come to him. After dinner, when the company had dispersed, and Annasaheb reclined on an easy-chair, Nanasaheb, who had done likewise, suddenly got up and began to mutter something and walk about the room. Annasaheb inquired what he was reciting and Nana replied that he was reciting the Vishnusahasranama (the thousand names of Vishnu). At this Annasaheb was very much surprised as Nana was known to be an Atheist. Annasaheb asked in great surprise, 'Then you believe that there is a God?' Nanasaheb answered gravely, 'To tell you the truth, I have never had time to think over the question nor have I ever felt the need of putting everything aside to follow this quest

But I have a mathematical mind, so I calculated that if there is no God, we are not responsible to anybody and are masters of our time, so who can take us to task for wasting fifteen minutes out of the twenty-four hours, as one may throw a pice into the gutter? But if there happens to be a God, and man is responsible to Him for the way he spends his life, then He may ask me after death what I had done for Him, and what will be my fate if I cannot answer? I prefer therefore to spend fifteen minutes a day for Him, so that in case He exists and asks me the question, I can answer with great force, "I have done nothing else, but I never took food without having spent fifteen minutes for you every day." (This seems inaccurate as he was apparently doing it after dinner, R. D. K.) "My grandmother gave me three rules of conduct in my childhood: To repeat these thousand names, to worship the Shaligrama with a Tulasi leaf and to put sandalwood paste on my forehead. And I have always followed these rules. If there is no God, it will only mean that I have wasted fifteen minutes every day, but I will not suffer in any way." Asked how he managed the other two rules while travelling, Nana explained, "When there is any difficulty about it, I do with my finger the gesture of putting the sandalwood on my forehead, and I imagine that I have put the Tulasi leaf and say to myself that I have done it, so that I am not a cheat!" The author adds: "The moral of this story is worth keeping in mind. It is impossible to find anywhere else a line of argument which so beautifully decides such a difficult question. Annasaheb Patwardhan used to relate this story to everybody, saying that even highly educated people, engaged in finding a solution to the riddle of the

Universe, might with advantage follow the example of Nanasaheb."

The argument is evidently correct for an agnostic, if we ignore the consideration that such childishness is hardly consistent with Omnipotence and Omniscience. This is only an ingenious attempt to rationalise behaviour due to ideas enforced in childhood. They made it impossible for him to see the crass stupidity of the idea that a repetition of names can lead to salvation, even on the supposition that there is a God.

* * *

A Hindu or A Musalman?

(A Religious Conundrum)

Though personal vanity is generally laughed at, group vanity is universally acclaimed as a great virtue, except of course by other groups. The way in which every petty religious sect claims superiority over every other does not seem to strike religious people as comic. I suppose religion makes the mind obtuse.

There is a Marathi monthly published in Goa which claims to demonstrate to the world the absolute superiority of Hindu culture over every other kind. A correspondent, greatly perplexed, appeals to the Editor to solve the following knotty problem:—

A Sadhu established himself on the bank of a river about two years back and became very popular and expressed a desire to build a temple of Datta (or Dattatreya, who is supposed to be a combination of the three principal Hindu Gods, the Hindu Trinity. R. D. K.) Meanwhile he removed to a temple in another village, where ultimately his desire was carried out by his disciples. While the dome of the temple was being erected, the Sadhu wanted a crescent to be put on the dome. This excited suspicion, but the Sadhu pacified the people by explaining that

the Moon did not really belong to Musalmans, that the Hindus had every claim to it, especially as the Hindu God Shiva wore the Moon on his head, and besides that, the Moon was an emblem of peace. The crescent was therefore put on the dome as he desired, and the temple was duly consecrated by several extremely Reverend Hindu priests. Two weeks after this, another Sadhu came there and seeing the crescent, accused the first Sadhu of being a Musalman. It seems that the first Sadhu left for Mysore the same day without attaching much importance to the accusation. But people now began to blame the Brahmins who performed the duties of worship assigned to them.

The correspondent wants to know:

1. Whether the temple is desecrated because of the crescent on the dome, and
2. Whether, if the rumour of the Sadhu being a Musalman was true, blame would attach only to the priests who worshipped or also to the priests who consecrated the temple under the crescent?

The poor man seems to have lost his sleep over it. A few other questions will arise from this story. If a Sadhu is suspected to be a Musalman because he wants a crescent on the dome of the temple of a Hindu God, why should a god who wears the crescent on his head not be liable to the same suspicion? Again, which Moon is this that the god wears on his head? He is supposed to have put him there because he felt very hot from the effect of some poison he had swallowed and thought the Moon was cool! But how is it that the Moon is still seen in the sky in all its phases? The god is still represented with a crescent moon on his head, so it must be a different Moon, not the one we see, or the god must have surreptitiously cut out a piece for himself. This last supposition is possible, because it is well known that we only see one side of the moon, the other being always turned away from us. This is a mystery, but what is religion without a mystery?

R. D. KARVE.

[We have also heard certain Christians express the same belief that to believe in a God even when one is not sure of his existence is a safer attitude than mere unbelief. This peculiar way of thinking only illustrates the childish idea many have of their diety. All a conditional affair to avoid a trap supposed to have been laid by the Devil!

Ed. REASON.]

GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD.

Judged by any standard, in whatever field one may, the whole scheme of things appears to hang on a careful balancing of profit and loss. While a huge stellar body is disintegrating at one place, a gradual gathering-in of star-vapour into definite shape with calculable movement is emerging in a remote corner of interstellar space. As easily as an insect is crushed underfoot, is life evolving in some

lone corner of neglected vegetation. The wolf gains what the lamb loses. One's loss is the neighbour's opportunity.

Limping science cautiously framed a law, a theory, albeit a mere hypothesis, and a good enough working hypothesis at that, that matter is indestructible, and the sum-total of energy conserved in the universe is constant. Of course, modern

methods are seeking to break the atom into its primal energies, but that, by itself, need not dislodge the crowning head of all scientific investigation, the monarch of all assumptions, *viz.*, the conservation of energy. For, if anything, a successful operation on attenuated matter, and its resolution into forms of energy, will only emphasize the identity of the truth involved in a dual statement of the law as to indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy. Melt the atom, and a double-faced law will merely attain its normal unity, and no more injurious consequences will result that devitalize the law itself.

The total output of the world's resources is not the more unlimited. Its productivity is alike subject to the rule of integral and differential calculus. The number of producers, multiplied by the quotient of their brain and muscular efficiency, minus the cost of production including the cost of maintenance, coupled with the co-efficient of demand and supply based upon the integral value of the thing produced, reduced into terms of standard value, squared at that, and cube-rooted on something else, stands for the equation at the(n)th degree of terrestrial wealth, at any given point of time. But, it is an ascertained figure. Withal, it is a limited numeral.

One may trespass into the strong-rooms that shelter the earnings of the church, mosque, and temple. Decades of decadence, centuries of piety with or without fraud, and strata of despondent dedication reminding us of all the ages of the earth, the miocene, pleocene, pleostocene, and the neo-pleostecene, all shapes of faith, and all shades of morals, have contributed to swell their coffers. And yet, the sum-total

of their present worth is an ascertained amount. Its value, like all else, is positive one way, and the other way, well, one may easily guess. If, madam somebody brought some cash into the temple and some scandal with her, and is absolved, while the trustee misappropriates that amount and serves his term, the ledger account of the intermediate deity remains unaffected. For, after all, the offerings to god were meant for being utilised, and there are no trustworthy agents of divinity better than his caretakers. The bank accounts of all the highpriests put together minus the sums spent on their indolence represents their finite existence.

Religion was the first to perceive this finiteness in the entire scheme of things and to feel disturbed over the limitations of this finiteness. Man is mortal, hence it longed for his immortality. He was once ultra-moral, and it invented the device of a serpent and in alliance with Eve it supplied immorality, as if, by so doing, it supplemented his moral existence. Man's vision is finite, and so, it happens that it coined the idea of the infinite. But this projection of thought is not, and by its very nature, cannot be, infinite in every way. It is a projection of thought in only a desired direction. If a straight line AB were to be produced to infinity, it may be done by drawing the line in the direction of B (which may, for convenience be called the *positive terminus*) or stretching it towards A (the *negative terminus*). But such is the play of human desire even in the most essential fields, as none more essential can be imagined than when it concerns human belief on its most vital question of existence, that it fondly clings to the pleasanter, the benevolent, the merciful, the just phases of an imagined infinite entity. He is all-powerful, all-pervading, and all-seeing, but he is good, merciful, just

and loving. If it is pointed out, that in mundane affairs, justice often clashes with goodness, mercy and love, and an inexorable scientific justice rules out the fiat of divine mercy, the vast canopy of infinity is pressed into service to shield an inexplicable enigma. One may solve the most intricate problem wading through huge labyrinths, but he who points his finger at infinity for solution cuts the knot wholesale. To him, the ramifications of mathematical calculations have no meaning, and his precision in life and thought meet at infinity. The religionist's god is thus an unlimited-liability concern, wherein neither the establishment nor the customer is on a sound footing. The infinite credulity of the latter is no guarantee for the credulous infinity of the former. Ever depending on blind belief, for the bare continuance of a doubtful existence, the so-called omnipotent pines away into the shadow of imagination, whose off-spring he really is.

It is obvious, however, that it is just as possible to produce the line in the contrary direction. Experience supports the presence in the same degree of cruelty, carelessness, indifference to human safety, even direct antagonism to human and other forms of life. Amid the faint streaks of light, ponderous darkness persists. Despite feeble attempts made by truth to gain ground, immense falsehood triumphs. The ravages of death seem more formidable in the circumference than the slender quickenings of life at the centre. God to be complete should comprise or comprehend falsehood, death and darkness. He is as much the opposite of love as love itself. To make the extremes meet, the pious devotee has to close his eyes and stretch toward infinity. In the very process of infinitisa-

tion, he is unconsciously giving away the case for theism, which rests on the basis of a benevolently designing personality.

Conceding that infinite goodness is possible, it should, in that case require no balancing. An infinite account requires no balancing. However largely it is drawn upon, yet it should retain its infinity intact. Unless the minus figure is equally infinite, God must always be maintaining his constancy at infinity. But such is the evidence of science and human experience alike, that God seems to be perpetually engaged in making adjustment. And progressive adjustment presupposes antecedent maladjustment. When he is getting rich, initially he started as a poor beggar. In the forms of life, in the evolution of consciousness, and of the glimmering perception of the moral law, there is no room for the primary hand of perfection. Evolution and progress, devolution and retrogression, evidence the diverse grades of such perfection as much as to say that change is the order of life, and not a static perfection attained by any form of divinity. What needs an Omnipotence to destroy a star to build another out of dust or to conserve energy or to make another's bread depend on yet another's charity or to steel money from a credulous fool to gild the domes of pious immorality? Yet such is the evidence furnished allround, viewed from the four corners of the horizon, and collated in the four opening paragraphs. The idea of the infinite is an abstraction, and alike mischievous. Greatness, goodness and love, have their limitations however great and good and loving they may be.

A finite God, therefore, made man in his own image. Hence man is finite. And

man made the rupee in his own image. And rupee is finite too. If its potency is fast running out, man must himself find a substitute. The system of life followed on the planet hitherto is seen proving itself of less utility, and fresh avenues should be explored to replace its resources. Capitalism and industrialism has disclosed the fallacies of over-production and unemployment. Depression in the bay, depression on land, everywhere depression is in the air. The ancient song "water, water every where, but not a drop to drink" is literally being fulfilled. The world-production is said to burden the markets, and dull prices are ending in financial crashes. Neither the poor are fed nor the rich maintained. Instead of analysing the system to locate the trouble and find a human remedy for the man-begotten evil, religion enthroned in the Holy See sends forth the prayer "Lord, Give us this day our daily bread." It is a pathetic story, alike in the profundity of its ignorance, as in the helplessness of its supernatural dependence. "Our daily

bread", such as we are hitherto accustomed to have, is it that bread, we want—the bread leavened with all its associations of cruel exploitation and wanton indolence at the expense of hungry masses? And to keep the show going as before, it is necessary to supplement the condition and desire that atheism should be weeded out. Any attempt at a rational, human solution of the world's monetary trouble should be stifled as communism. It is the tragedy of ignorance that rules out an honest application of the human talent to a solution of human problems, and like the dying fish in a drying-up pond sends forth shrieking prayers to an unheeding providence to let the gentle raindrops fall, and fancying that a bird that quenches its thirst in the pond is responsible for their destruction, it lays the blame at the door of the normal user of its faculties. Reason ordains man to analyse, experiment and find a solution, rather than send forth prayers towards the vacant sky and curses in the direction of a brother.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

IS BIRTH CONTROL MORAL?

One feels a hesitancy in approaching the discussion of the religious aspects of the problem of birth control. To the liberal, this hesitancy is not born of any lack of conviction concerning the superior morality of an intelligent use of contraception. It is due rather to a disinclination to enter into theological arguments which are usually of little or no avail, because the different sides approach the discussion from such different premises. I have the utmost respect for orthodox religions of all denominations. I understand full well the basis on which Roman Catholics, Fundamentalist Protestants and Orthodox Jews denounce birth con-

trol. I cannot agree with their conclusions, but I do not question the sincerity of their beliefs. Moreover, I would not for a moment interfere with their honest convictions. I deeply resent, however, their interference with the honest convictions of others and their endeavor to invoke the law to foist their one-sided moral concepts upon their fellow-men.

Let us face the situation honestly and frankly. Among the better educated classes and certainly among that large group known as the middle class, some form of contraception is practised by the great majority of people who are not

sterile. They have no sense of sinfulness in the pursuit of this practice. Indeed, they feel that they are adopting the wiser and more ethical habit of life. Their moral judgment is corroborated by many religious organizations representing millions of adherents. I mention only a few of the larger religious bodies which have endorsed the principles of birth control: the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the Universalist General Convention, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Congregational and Christian Churches, the Woman's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Triennial Convention, the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, and the American Unitarian Association. In addition to these, there are many local and state organizations of a religious nature which have taken a similar attitude.

Let us look at the definition of morality from an historical point of view. We find at once that it is not a static thing, even in religious circles. Not even in the pages of the Bible! It is a far cry from the vengeful God of Samuel who punishes Saul for not exterminating the Amalekites to the great spiritual Being of Isaiah who pleads with man for universal peace. The God of Exodus with his jealousy and blood ritual and the slaughter of the first-born of one's enemies was moral enough in that day, but He was superseded by the nobler morality of the God of Hosea whose dominant characteristic is infinite love.

The intelligence of man grows through scientific knowledge, and with it his spirit grows, and his appreciation of God and morality. We feel that the potentialities of man for knowledge are God-given, and it is under the influence of this expanding God-given intelligence that his moral

concepts change. Dogmatic religion will not concede this fact. And when I say dogmatic religion, I do not confine the term to any one denomination. The reactionaries among religious groups have not only refused to concede development until forced to; they have bitterly opposed the progress of the mind of man, and in so doing have stultified his spirit. They fought against the teaching that the earth moved around the sun. Throughout the centuries they burned at the stake those who would tear the veil of ignorance from human eyes. Even today, they bitterly contest the right to teach, even as a theory, the evolutionary idea which science supports.

Their opposition to birth control is based on the Biblical command to Adam: "Be fruitful and multiply." But there is a greater command in that same Bible: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And the best known maxim of Jesus of Nazareth is a similar phrase: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We who have the advantages of modern scientific knowledge use intelligent means of regulating the number of our progeny. There are millions who are denied a decent knowledge of this subject, who come in throngs to doctors and social agencies and ministers begging for such information. If we were denied such knowledge, we would crave, in the name of the Golden Rule, that those who were informed would impart it to us. The ethical challenge is to show justice and love to the masses whose happiness is imperiled by ignorance of this important subject. Furthermore, this same Bible which commands man to "Be fruitful and multiply" also commands woman in the following terms: "In pain shalt thou bear children." By an analogous argument it is, therefore, obvious that it is God's law

that pain must accompany childbirth. Why not, then, in the name of ethics, institute a statute against using anaesthetics in childbirth? Read the history of the development of anaesthetics and you will find the horrible story of religious opposition to this form of humanity. The lessening of the labor pains of woman is contrary to the will of God! Is that the God in whom you and I would believe? Is such a cruel Being, taking delight in the misery of His creatures, the Supreme Spirit? If He is such a Being, I say that I want nothing to do with Him, that the finest morality of man would be to defy Him. But I do not believe in this reactionary interpretation of what is God's law. I believe that He has given man the mind to conquer pain and misery, and to work out a happier society. It is the pursuit of that law which is the real fulfillment of His appointed destiny for man.

The very righteous opponents of birth control insist that it makes for immoral relations, especially among young people. I wonder at the frankness with which they admit the miserable role in which they place mankind. I marvel at their frankness in announcing that they believe that it is only fear which keeps our women decent. If this is the basis that their religion gives them for morality, I would advise them to look for a better and a deeper motive. I would advise them to acquire a God who inspires men toward an ideal by a revelation of beauty, rather than a God who holds men in serfdom through terrifying fears.

Aside from these ethical considerations, we have the concrete facts to the contrary. Holland has for a long time given governmental sanction to the dissemination of scientific birth-control knowledge. The

proportion of sexual immorality in this country is far less than within our own borders, which are protected so sanctimoniously by fanatical law.

"It's Against Nature"

A recent papal encyclical announced dogmatically that "birth control is against God and nature." I do not like dogmatic inferences concerning the monopoly of the knowledge of God. The definitions of God are innumerable. There are creeds of countless denominations, and even within these denominations millions of individuals differ as to what God is and what He is not—and God alone knows who is right and who is wrong. I, for one, cannot believe that the elimination of indiscriminate, irresponsible breeding is contrary to the will of a God who has given man a mind to discover how to modify and direct the blind forces of nature. I believe that the supreme revelation of God is the mind and spirit of man, that translate gross nature into aesthetic and social values.

Let us venture the thought, moreover, that if we are speaking of crimes against nature, celibacy is the greatest crime against the natural impulses of sex. The longing for parenthood is natural and moral. I say this not as the protagonist of any particular philosophy. I say it as a father. I wish that the millions of human beings who are denied the joy of parenthood could receive some sense of its physical and spiritual exaltation. I wish that homes of only one child would, (where the physical and economic conditions permit) enlarge the experience of parenthood and bring a most necessary companionship to their only child. No, I do not fail to appreciate the natural beauty of parenthood. I want it to be a wilful thing of man's ethical choice, and

not a mere reflex of animalism. I want it elevated and ennobled by the knowledge that our God-given intellects have brought us, the intellects that help us to transcend brute forces of life and become in some little degree moral masters of our environment. I believe that the greatest morality consists in controlling blind nature. Celibacy or abstinence are ascetic cowardice. Bravery is to use and direct by intelligent control. If it is a crime to interfere with natural forces, why is not every force that tries to heal the sick a crime? Why are not our toxin-antitoxin inoculations, which save millions of children from the ravages of diphtheria one of the greatest crimes against God and nature? Man limits and modifies all natural functions by his growing knowledge of them. Why is the field of propagation any different?

"It Ruins Marriage and Homes"

I have seen it repeatedly alleged by those trying to build up a moral case against birth control that it makes for immorality and license in family life. Anyone who is in a position which throws him into intimate contact with many homes can testify that there is nothing which robs the married relationship of its finer beauty like the terror and often the hatred engendered between man and wife by the means of too frequent pregnancies. Let us be wholesome enough to speak of a beauty to marriage that, in the existence of true love, transcends even the joys of parenthood—I mean the perfect physical union of a devoted man and woman. There, the physical becomes the channel of revelation of spiritual glory which only those who have loved in this complete manner can ever know. It is love of the *Song of Songs* which many floods of adversity cannot quench. It is

the impulse to the finest idealism, the noblest of self sacrifice, the most glorious consecration of which man is capable. Contraception, intelligently employed, makes for the experience of this greatest joy of life. It is this more than all else which truly cements the marriage relationship. Children may force people to live together in what is often a hell on earth. A perfect synthesis of physical and spiritual love means indissoluble happy union.

The full refutation of the charge that birth control is dangerous to life and health belongs to the physician. From the moral point of view, it is far better to teach people scientifically sound contraceptive measures than to force them in ignorance and desperation to several admittedly harmful methods. As Dean Inge says, "The only alternative to birth control is abortion." The statistics for fanaticism-ridden America indicate that we make wide use of the alternative. Contraception is ethical. Abortion, in most cases, is immoral. Fanaticism once more conspires with the devil.

I do not regard birth-control as a panacea for economic suffering. Nor do I look upon it as a worthy permanent antidote for the results of social injustice. The exploitation and the economic oppression which breed our slums, bind men in virtual serfdom and prevent them from having the environment or means for decent-sized families, must be attacked fundamentally on other grounds than an advocacy of contraception. There must be a basic renovation of many features of our present greed society. There must be a finer social conscience. However, until the time of the realization of these economic cures arrives, contraception becomes an ethical phase of

the problem of alleviating the terrible ills that now exist. In the present unemployment crisis, there are certain essential cures that must ultimately be put into effect. They are basic—yet it would be worse than criminal to say that we should not immediately feed the starving because such feeding is not a basic cure of the situation. Similarly, while in the economic field other measures are fundamental, it is immoral not to relieve immediately the sufferings of the oppressed by tender-

ing them intelligent contraception, so that they may have few children in some decency instead of many at the price of starvation, vice, and death. The soundest moral and social arguments for birth control are outside the economic field. However, to fail to use contraception to alleviate the loss of present day economic society is simply to compound a felony.

RABBI EDWARD L. ISRAEL.

in "Birth-control Review."

BIOLOGY AND LIFE.

We shall frequently find that in some schools of philosophy the nomenclature of science has quite a different meaning from that used by the scientist in the laboratory. Indeed, when the latter himself is drawn into philosophical discussion he, too, is apt to forget the lessons of his research, and to share in the jargon which has little or no connexion with it.

Take the term "life," for instance. In science life is a concept, in vitalist philosophy, a principle. The difference is important. A scientific concept is a label for a class of properties which can be investigated; a principle is something beyond analysis, something final and irreducible, a basic existent, indivisible and fundamental. And in order to give life the semblance of such, "life" in the scientific laboratory becomes "Life" in the philosophical system. In the capital letter we see the twentieth century attenuation of what the Malanesians call *mana*.

"Life," says the type of philosopher we have in mind, "is individual . . . and each living being is indivisible, a whole not constituted of parts" (the quotation is from Wildson Carr).

Now if the words in italics were actually true, daily experiments by students in physiological and pharmacological laboratories would be rendered impossible, and the whole progress of biology has been made possible by the implicit rejection of Carr's doctrine. The physiologist

takes the living machine to pieces and studies the properties of its several parts. The experimental embryologist can put it together again. (Prof. L. Hogben.)

A well known example is the removal of a frog's heart from the body, perfusing it with a suitable saline to keep its heat, and then arresting, restarting and accelerating its rhythm by changing the constituents of the saline medium. Here is an organ displaying properties of living matter (*i. e.*, being "alive") when the rest of the body has ceased to do so. Similarly

it is possible to study properties of nerve, muscle, the cell membrane, absorption of food in the gut, oxidation of nitrogenous materials in the liver, etc., as isolated events (*ibid*).

"But," pursues our philosopher, "you cannot re-assemble the living system, as you can a motor car." Yet even here the analogy with the machine holds, this despite the infancy of science. The work of Ross Harrison has shown that the head end of a tadpole of one species can be grafted on to the tail end of a tadpole of another species, while five-legged and two-legged newts are now manufactured in the laboratory.

Life, then, is not a unity; the organism not a finished product. Metamorphosis is a striking example, and is mechanically conditioned. There is no need to resort to a purposive agency anywhere; at the will of the scientist tadpoles may be permanently detained in the larval state; at his will their change into the adult may be accelerated or prolonged.

In the normal tadpole the change is initiated by the liberation of the thyroid secretion. Thus the removal of the rudimentary thyroid gland in the frog embryo will produce a thyroidless tadpole, one which will never mature. A similar result can be obtained by depriving the tadpole of iodine, which normally is used by the thyroid gland to effect metamorphosis: again we have a permanent tadpole.

On the other hand, the American salamander, *Amblystoma tigrinum*, has a characteristic larval state. It inherits a deficient thyroid gland, which cannot utilize the surrounding iodine, and consequently its form *normally* remains larval. The biologist can produce a mature, land-dwelling salamander in a few weeks by feeding with thyroid gland. Again, the scientist interferes with "Life". He conditions external agencies which will modify, quicken, arrest; and the analogy holds good with human beings (dieting,

etc.). Where is the inaccessible "principle of Life?"

Life, then, is not something permanently removed from scientific treatment: it is more and more found to be determinably conditioned. What, then, is it? The definition here used is from *The Nature of Living Matter*: the only intelligible significance of the word "life" in scientific discussion is to denote collectively the characteristic properties of living matter, such as receptivity, reactivity and reproduction. Life is thus treated as a concept; not as a principle or unity.

Is there any property of living matter which is intrinsically incapable of being imitated in the laboratory from non-living materials? The whole development of biology goes to suggest that there is not and the onus of proof lies with the vitalist.

It is not so much a question of whether science actually will produce a *homo sapiens*, but whether there is anything to make such an achievement intrinsically impossible, *i. e.* whether there is in "life" something inaccessible to scientific treatment. As Prof. A. V. Hill says:—

Although such experiments are not possible on men or animals or plants as may be made on non-living objects, there is little evidence—indeed, I would be bold and say there is no evidence—that such living creature can in any manner or degree evade the ordinary laws of mechanics, chemistry and physics.

Thus, by refusing to accept a conception of life which removes it except in degree from the ordinary practice prevailing in the laboratory, the biologist

is making an important contribution to philosophy, and one which may serve to correct impressions made by *physicists* like Eddington and Lodge, and by writers like Carr, who spent the bulk of his adult life on the Stock Exchange.

Modern biological progress is sufficient

alone to demolish both the Vitalist type of philosophy and the Christian plan of survival. The question, "do the dead live?" becomes as irrelevant as "does an extinguished light burn?"

G. H. TAYLOR.
in "The Freethinker"

AT THE SECRETARIES' TABLE.

Local branches.

At the last meeting of the Executive committee the question of the formation of local branches outside Bombay was considered. It was felt that as far as possible it was desirable to have a central organisation with a large membership. Should the members in any particular locality be sufficient in number then they could further organise themselves into a local branch and carry on various activities suitable to the local conditions. This branch could then admit other members who might pay a smaller fee only to that branch and get the benefits of that branch. The head office in Bombay will send a copy of Reason free to this local branch. But a small fraction of the subscription of its members shall be paid to the head office only to maintain a link with it. The branch office will be autonomous so far as finance is concerned, and its activities will be only limited by the aims and objects of an Association.

Memorial to Ingersoll.

August 13, 1933 will be the 100th

anniversary of the birth of Col. Ingersoll. The Freethinkers of America have formed an international committee with Thomas A. Edison as Honorary President to raise a memorial to Ingersoll. The memorial will take the form of a monument. The Secretary has addressed the Editor of the Reason to make a special appeal to our readers. We hope all Rationalists will contribute willingly and as much as they can. The estimated cost of the memorial is \$ 25,000. The subscriptions may be sent direct to the Treasurer of the Ingersoll Centennial Memorial Fund, 317, East, 34th Street, New York or be sent to us when it will be forwarded to the above address.

New Members—The following have joined our Association : F. C. Mahindra, V. K. N. Menon M. A. (Oxon). Mrs. L. Menon M. A. LL. B, K. P. G. Menon M. A. (Oxon) Bar-at-Law, M. A. Chadray, R. P. Shah, Bar-at-Law. B. M. Bapat, B. A., Mrs. H. T. Soloman, R. E. Hawkins, G. V. Rajaratnam, G. M. Van Der Mey (Jr.)

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BOMBAY-THE NEW HOLY CITY.

Bombay has so far striven hard to maintain its reputation as the first city in India. Now it is well-nigh becoming the first holy city in the East. The Sadhus that had visited Nasik last month, have invaded Bombay. The invasion has been gradual and progressive. A fortnight back you may have been taken aback by seeing a made sadhu near Babulnath. But today the whole of Chowpatty shore has become their camp. Some "religious persons" have provided them with tents, big and small, and with umbrellas—In the mornings we find ladies distributing tea and ghee. During the last two days it has been raining and some "good soul" is supplying them with cart-loads of firewood. When it is bright the entire place is crowded by these Sadus and their devotees.

I do not think we have any right to object to people believing in anything they like. All that we can do is to point out their error. Here the error is so palpable, that only such as those that do not wish to change will continue in their devotion. But one may pertinently raise the question whether Chowpatty sea-face is a suitable place for such a

display. This part of the city has been spoilt a great deal by the hawkers, and now we have this collection taking away what little was left. This area served as a small place where ladies and children of the surrounding district could enjoy a spell of fresh sea-air. But all that is gone. The place is dirtied by these sadhus who use it for all their purposes, and who have no sense of decency in doing what they want to do before everybody. Religious ardour must have a limit and letting these mendicants sport themselves in the way they do, is certainly besmearing Bombay's good name. There are other places in the city where these persons could be accommodated without offending the aesthetic or olfactory sensations of the passers-by. In no other civilised country would such a display of primitive life be displayed. It is only here, where religion is at a premium, that all this nonsense is tolerated. I hope our city fathers and the health authorities will realise the gravity of the situation and cleanse the shore of the squalor that we now see there.

G. COELHO.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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[Monthly ;

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hon'y. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

Wounding Religious Feelings.

One of the bug-bears of rationalistic journalism is this fear of offending religious feelings. The law that has been drafted by religious people has provided all the possible penalties for this offence. Hence you have the Blasphemy Act and various other Acts in different parts of the world. These acts apply not only to the written word, but to the spoken as

well. This is not all. Even in small private groups the same restriction holds. You cannot discuss religion freely, because in doing so you hold it up for contempt, quite unwittingly of course, and then you hurt. Just this month, the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay confessed he hesitated to apply the law to the "Sadhus" at Chowpatty because he feared the consequences. He managed to get them their fares to Dwarka, etc.

and sent them away. But lo! once again you have a fresh batch of them on the sands. This time they have camped with tents; they are a trifle more considerate towards the ladies that live on Chowpatty sea-face! They will probably remain here till some "benevolent Hindu" volunteers to pay their fares. The Bombay citizens will have to be pestered in this manner because one is afraid of wounding religious feelings. In August we had one more example—Government gave in and permitted a procession of naked fakirs only because if they refused this permission, religious feelings would be hurt. In England, the Parliament is wasting its time in passing bills regulating the closure of cinemas, theatres, playgrounds on Sundays, again for the same reason. Dissemination of rationalistic knowledge or discussion on birth-control is taboo on the broadcasting service because it hurts religious feelings. It is easy to multiply examples. But the point about it is that it is all one-sided. It is the feelings only of the religious that are sacrosanct. The Freethinker, the Agnostic, the Atheist have no feelings. They can be ridiculed, fooled in private, in public, from the pulpit, in the press; yet they can have no redress. But even the worm will turn one day. Is it any wonder then that in Russia there is intolerance for religion? Catholic, Protestant and other religious visionaries are "pained" at the treatment accorded to religion in Russia, and are attempting to feed fat their grudge by assailing Communism. Though there is a vast number of people who are indifferent to religion, still quite a number of these are timid of any anti-religious propaganda. But the undesirable aspect of religion can only be washed away by free criticism helped by a liberal dose of ridicule. Man hates be-

ing ridiculed. We must fight for this liberty. We do not want the liberty of a young mullah fulminating against Kaffirs or of a priest, just over twenty, telling his audience "I tell you these Scientists are misguided. They say man has evolved from the apes, then I ask why do not the apes in the Victoria Gardens become men and women? (laughter). They have been there long enough. They say there is no God. But I ask them have they created man?" No, not for such nonsense! We want liberty for good honest criticism, and good dignified ridicule! We want protection against the ignorant parson, the fanatic mullah. They not only hurt our feelings, but make a gash into them.

Gandhi's Fast—The Acid Test.

Gandhi's fast has convulsed the whole of India and made Hindu orthodoxy sit up. At the moment of writing agreement is being reached between the various leaders. I wish that it is arrived at soon before the life of Mr. Gandhi is in danger. It is difficult to appreciate whether fasting to death is the rational step. But this world is not all reason, there is a lot of emotion and there are these "inner voices" which are a class by themselves. However, the respect that the nation has for Gandhiji is so great that the orthodox Hindus are prepared to negotiate with the depressed classes to save his life. Gandhi at the moment fasts only for the problem of legislative representation, but he has greater ambitions. He wants untouchability to be wiped out root and branch and has given notice of his intentions to the orthodox Hindus. The extent to which untouchability will disappear in social life will be the acid test of the earnestness of the orthodox. At the moment it seems the orthodox Hindu

value the life of Gandhi more than all the injustice they have done to their countrymen in the name of God and religion. This is certainly very complimentary to Gandhi, but in no way flattering either to the Untouchables or the Shastras. On the 20th many men and women were fasting in sympathy with the Mahatma, but there was hardly any fraternisation between the orthodox and the untouchables. I am certain it would have gladdened Gandhi's heart more if he had learnt that the orthodox prepared the best dishes and shared them with the untouchables; that they paid social calls; that they took them in their cars round the town; that people like Pandit Malaviya eat at a non-Brahmin restaurant, and that such as prayed held mass prayer-meetings with the untouchables. But all this did not take place. Since the twentieth we are reading of new temples being opened, of appeals for the removal of untouchability. The former is certainly *a practical step and we congratulate the Trustees who have instituted a ballot system to know the wishes of the worshippers.* This should be followed up by

removing the social restrictions regarding wells, schools, restaurants, etc.

Let the orthodox Hindus get rid of the Brahmin Maharaj who only can cook their food, and employ any one who can cook well. Let eminent orthodox men like Pandit Malaviya, Kelkar, eat food from any place where it is clean and wholesome; let them permit everyone who is again neat and clean to come and sit next to them and eat with them. Some of the caste Hindus consider touching an Untouchable a great advance in social reform. We want more than that. We want caste Hindus not to tell us that the life of Mahatma is more precious than the lives of millions of depressed classes. We want them to reform Hindu society because in the name of God and religion they have been inhuman towards the latter class. Justice has long been overdue. Now that they are prepared to open their eyes, we hope they will keep them always open and make amends for the past.

ALI AKBAR.

SOCIETY HAS NO NEED OF PRIESTS.

The minds of the followers of Vallabhipanth in India, and particularly in Bombay, are greatly exercised over the romantic episode of Shri Damodar Laljee, the son of Shri Gordhan Laljee, known as the Tilakayat (the High Priest) of Nathdwara where the temple of Shri Nathjee is situated. The said temple is in Udaipur State (Mewar) from whom it holds large 'jagirs'—about 30 villages for the purpose of 'puja' (worship) and for which "lagas" or annual contributions are made by a tax on trade in all part of India and which collections run into large figures.

The incident arose out of the second marriage of Damodar Laljee with Hansa, a singer of Delhi, on or about 18th June at Nainital. Damodar Laljee has a wife living by whom he has children. Not only Damodar Laljee took another wife, but it is alleged, that attempts were made to pass her off as a priestess, she being named Ratan Vahujee, "vahujee" being the suffix to names of the wives of Maharajas. It is also alleged that the pair, subsequent to their marriage, lived a luxurious life at Nainital and elsewhere and that Damodar Laljee acted in un-orthodox, un-vaishnav ways in food and drink. He on his return to Nathdwara, was admitted, with the knowledge and consent of his father, the Tilakayat, to worship.

When this came to be known, the followers of the said "punth" (sect) were greatly perturbed, and the Maharajs of the said "punth" known as "Gosains" held a meeting in Bombay and passed a resolution excommunicating Damodar Laljee. They then, accompanied by a battalion of their worshippers,

proceeded to Nathdwara to attempt to bring round Damodar Laljee, the Prodigal Son of their fold, and take other steps to vindicate the purity of their religion and worship and to restore the idol of Shri Nathjee, that was defiled by worship by Damodar Laljee, to its original pure undefiled state by Shastrie ceremonies on that behalf.

It would appear that at Nathdwara a patched pact has been arrived at, and henceforth, for the present at least, the curtain has fallen on the sensational episode. Damodar Laljee, it is alleged, is punished, and forfeits his succession to the "Gadi" of Tilakayat, and that an Administration Board is to be set up with the object of revenues being taken out of the hands of the Tilakayat, and arrangements are to be made for better administration of funds and proper worship of Shri Nathjee. It is also arranged that Damodar Laljee is not to be admitted to the worship of the idol, that he is to be kept in company of learned Shastris, so that the right mental balance and mode of life necessary in an officiating priest may be restored; and that in the meantime he is not to leave the State. But this keeps the question of "prayaschit" (purification) of Damodar Laljee open on which subject opinions are divided, and it is generally asked whether this is the end of the "leila" (play) of Damodar Laljee or does it open a new chapter as Madam Hansa is alleged to be taking legal action against her husband for conjugal rights and maintenance.

Out of evil cometh good, and the right of Gosain Maharaja to use the funds given for the worship of "murti" (idol)

and to treat them as *private property* and use the same as such, has been checked, and the principle, is laid down with the consent of the Tilakayat who is the head of all Gosain Maharajas, that they have no say in the matter but are only priests engaged for worship of the idol, and that gifts made are to the "*idol*" and not to the person of the *pujari*" (worshipper). Hence the claim so far made by Maharajas that the "Mandir (temple) is their property, and all offerings made belong to them, is knocked on the head. In course of time this must lead to Maharajas being *elected* for worship, like the Pope, the Sankaracharya, the Swami Narayan priests, and the Tilakayat may not in future get to the "Gadi" by Divine Right of Birth but may be elected subject to the veto of the Udaipur State, which has a voice in the matter.

Students of the Sect of Pushtimarg know that the record for debauchery in the name of religion goes to Vallabh Maharaj. They may be justly called virtuosos in debauchery and to think of them is to be reminded of Madam Roland and ask: "O, religion, religion, what things are not done in thy name." And in the words of Lecky, "this was not due to any accidental circumstances but was the normal product of the doctrines" of Vallabhi Sect freely avowed and practised. The Sect of Maharajas, known as "Gosain Bawas" was founded about four centuries back by Shri Vallabhacharya. It was a recoil from the asceticism of Shri Sankaracharya and by the swing of the pendulum taught enjoyment as bliss of life, this teaching being based on the "bhakti" worship of Shri Krishna. Whatever its merits in its pure form, the Vaishnavism of Shri Vallabhacharya degenerated into

Pushtimarg of his followers, and the worshippers were led from the worship of Shri Krishna into those of Gosain Maharajas. Their followers were taught to devote their "*tan, man and dhan*";—body, mind and purse,—to the Gosains who claimed to be incarnations of Shri Krishna, and to their followers the "*gopis*" and practices most revolting to the moral sense were indulged in. If we can apply a moral test set up by James Russel Lowell in his poem "Parable" and if Shri Krishna "without passing again through the gate of birth" were to descend to earth and see how Vallabhi Maharajas behave or rather misbehave, and prostitute and pollute his name and fame, there is no doubt he will hang his head in shame and out of the tons of "Prasad" from which Pushtimarga takes its name, draw the Scarlet Woman and ask if their altars were not founded on the bodies and souls of their worshippers.

To satisfy your readers that this is no metaphor but grim sad reality and tragedy of religion, I will refer them to Dr. Wilson who has studied that subject with that comprehensive range of thought which has made his name foremost amongst living Orientalists. He says:

"The sect of Vallabhacharya is a new sect, in as much as it has selected the God Shri Krishna in one of his aspects, that of his adolescence, and raised him to supremacy in that aspect. It is a new sect in so far as it has established the "*Pushtimarg* or way of enjoyment in a *natural and carnal sense*."

This succinct statement seems to contain the essence of the whole matter. It is Krishna, the darling of 16,000 *Gopis* (shepherdesses) Krishna, the

love hero, the husband of the 16,000 princesses who is the paramount object of Vallabhacharya's worship. This tinges the whole system with the stain of carnal sensualism, of strange, transcendental leudness.

What this was like can be seen from the judgment of Sir Mathew Sause in the Maharaj Libel Case:—

"It appears abundantly clear from works of recognised authority written by other Maharajas and from existing popular belief in the Vallabhacharya sect that Vallabhacharya is believed to have been an incarnation of the God of Krishna and that the Maharajas, as descendants of Vallabhacharya, have claimed and received from their followers the like character of incarnation of that God, by hereditary succession. The Maharajas have been sedulous in identifying themselves with the God Krishna by means of their own writings and teachings and by the similarity of ceremonies of worship and addresses which they require to be offered to them by their followers. All songs connected with the God Krishna which were brought before us were of an amorous character and it appears that songs of a corrupting and licentious tendency, both in idea and expression, are used in the name of religion.

These songs are sung by young females to the Maharajas, upon festive occasions in which they are identified with the God in his most licentious aspect. In these songs as well as in the stories, both written and traditional, which latter are treated as of a religious character in the sect, *the subject of sexual intercourse is most prominent. Adultery is made familiar to the minds of all; it is nowhere discouraged or denounced.*"

Sir Joseph Arnold in delivering Judgment said:

" * * * * It is not a question of theology that has been before us. It is a question of morality. The principle for which the defendant and his witnesses have been contending is simply this--that what is morally wrong cannot be theologically right--that when practices which sap the very foundations of morality, which involve a violation of the eternal and immutable laws of Right--are established in the name and under the sanction of Religion, they ought for the common welfare of society and in the interest of Humanity itself to be publicly denounced and exposed, * * * *"

As a matter of fairness to Gosain Maharajas, I must say that since the Libel Case things have improved, but it is open to question how far they have improved from *policy* more than from *principle*. Very many of them still lay claims to being "gods", but without being "godly." The Maharaja Libel Case is true today and the prototypes of Jadunathjee (the complainant) are still "alive and kicking". The serpent is somewhat scorched, but the poison is there and they are as "dangerous" and "wanted" as before.

History of Religions of West and East show that the priest is a *parasite* and a *moral plague*. Some of the greatest prophets have said the same, and they have emphasised it. It is well known that in the religion of Mahomed (Islam) *i. e.* "submission" to the will of God, the priest finds no place. According to Renan, the Christianity of Christ was a pure worship, a *religion without priest* and resting wholly on the feelings of the heart and he taught that the kingdom of God was within.

Jesus never shrank from his bold conclusion which made him an indomitable revolutionary in the very heart of Judaism. Why should there be mediators between man and his Father? Since God only sees the heart, to what good are those purifications, those observances relating to the body?

Religion rightly understood has and can have no place for the priest, who is a social and religious sponge and thus a parasite. But he, like the poor, is always with us, and to the extent he is kept out, religion can be kept unadulterated and pure. His presence pollutes it and it can well be said that when the priest comes in religion goes out.

But when once customs are established and prejudices have taken root, it takes time to reform them, for people cannot even endure that their evils should be touched with a view to their removal, like those stupid and cowardly patients that shudder at the sight of a physician.

It is with somewhat of such a feeling, as stated above, that Comte, the great French philosopher, gave his Positive Philosophy. The religious side of Positivism does away with theology and metaphysics and he reposes his system on science or positive knowledge alone. Comte discovered that there was something positive in man's craving for worshipping a Supreme Being. He therefore had recourse to what he calls the culture of humanity considered as a corporate being in the past, present and future. It is but natural that in its initial stages the following of such a religion of humanity will be small. But no doubt the disciples of this religion of humanity are increasing, and the rise of ETHICAL SOCIETIES shows which way the wind is blowing. The Dev

Samaj of Lahore which does not believe in any professed religion, but whose religion is *emphasis on character*, is also an indication in that direction.

I quote the following from teachings of the Ethical Movement to show what the new Movement is; it teaches all that is for the good, and there is nothing in it which any one can object to and as such these teachings should be the bond of humanity.

I. In all the relations of life, personal, social and political--*the moral factor should be the supreme consideration.*

II. The love of goodness and the love of one's fellows are the true motives of right conduct; and self-reliance and co-operation are the true sources of help.

III. Knowledge of the Right has been evolving through the experience of the human race; therefore the moral obligations generally accepted by the most civilised communities should be taken as the starting point in the advocacy of a progressive ideal of personal and social righteousness.

IV. For each individual, after due consideration of the conviction of others, *the final authority as to right or wrong of any opinion or action should be his own conscientious and reasoned judgment.*

V. The well being of society requires such economic and other considerations as afford the largest scope for the moral development of all its members.

VI. The scientific method should be applied in studying the facts of moral life.

VII. *The moral life involves neither acceptance nor rejection of belief in any deity, personal or impersonal, or in a life after death.*

In concluding I must expect that charity which to use the words of James Russel Lowell "sees a brother in the sinner" and conclude in the words of Ellia W. Wilcox:

"We are not like peas in a pod,
Compelled to lie in a certain line,
Or else be scattered abroad.
It were a dull world, methinks, my friend,

If we all went just one way.
Yet our paths will meet no doubt at the end
Though they lead apart today."

I wish to state that nothing will please me better, if what I state leads some of my brethren to enquire and to think. I ask for nothing more.

LAKMIDAS ROWJEE TAIRSEE.

THE PARABLE OF THE BOMBAY GIRL.

I have often told European people about the Bombay girl, whom I saw in a school for children of the Untouchables. The school was the poorest educational building I have ever seen in my 61 years (since 1871) of teaching and lecture-tours. But the poorly-clad girl had bright face and eyes.

"That girl," said the teacher to me, "attended with various caste-children at a public examination not long ago. She answered questions so intelligently that somebody said she must be a Brahmin girl!"

Twenty years have passed since this incident. Of the many things that impressed me during my visit to India, this was one of the most vivid at the moment, and in my memory. And here I use it as a parable.

For a good while past I have been slowly framing a syllabus, a summary of the history of the civilization—a scheme in which I have carefully included India, Persia, China and Japan. Of course, the varied scenes of human evolution have revealed many unhappy rivalries, frightful wars and massacres, persecutions and oppressions, poverty

and disease, lunacy and mental darkness. But when, so to speak, I have risen above these tumults, and, as if on a mountain, looked and listened for the revelation of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, I have become aware of the sunshine and music of civilization. The light gleams over all races,—Black, Brown, Yellow, and White, primitive, so-called savage, or progressive. And the music sounds its harmony in all the Ages. Just as the light of the sun falls with the same radiance on all the seas, continents and islands of the globe, so the light of man's essential unity glows over all the and nations. And just as music played on many and diverse instruments, and in numerous keys and models, so human energy and wit express themselves in a multitude of ways,—in mastery of nature, in agriculture, in mining, in animal-taming, in seamanship, in travels of exploration, in weaving and other crafts, in machinery, in money-systems, in commerce, in poetry, in song, in drama, in dance, in architecture, in sculpture, in painting, in pottery, in costume in gardening, in household order, in hygiene, in law, in courtesy, in justice, in mercy, in co-operation, in political administra-

tion, in emancipations from penury and slavery and outworn creeds. The story of all these efforts and achievements is History in the best sense of the term. I rejoice to know that pioneer educationists all over the world are awakening to the supreme value of this conception of the social evolution of man. To learn this story is to gain self-reliance, self-confidence, self-direction. Within the next hundred years, the schools and universities of the whole earth will ring with this truth. We are on the threshold of a splendid new age.

I said at a congress in Paris in 1930: "There is but one child in the world." I meant that human hearts and minds have a universal capacity for appreciating and utilizing all the knowledge and the creative art that education can impart. No temple and no jewel is so beautiful as the nature of a child that waits to be instructed and to be disciplined and to be unfolded in its powers and vision.

Ah! but the world-child is like the poor Bombay girl,—though full of capacity, yet poor in opportunity; though strong in possible talent, yet hampered by difficulties economic and intellectual. I will not now discuss economics though I desire to say in passing, that no man or

woman can justly claim to understand education who neglects the physical and material basis of life, health and ability. But on the intellectual side, I point the accusing finger at the theologies of Asia, Europe, Africa, America, Australia. I point the accusing finger at the temples, the mosques, the churches, the chapels, the synagogues, the mission-halls, the prayer-mats, the ancient books wrongly called Divine. I have frequently said (though all Rationalists do not agree with me) that these forms of Faith have had social and ethical uses in their time. But that time is past. These theologies hinder the expansion and the ascent of humanity's being. These theologies cast a shadow over the Bombay girl. These theologies bar the universal child,—imprisoned in narrow creeds, as the girl was fastened in a miserable building,—from the riches and the glory of the arts, the sciences, the joyful research and discovery of which the mind of man is naturally capable. For this reason, and not because I had any delight in destroying doctrines, I have for more than fifty years, laboured in the cause of Rationalism.

FREDERICK J. GOULD.

THE GATHAS ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

Ahura Mazda—The Omniscient.

In the Sanj Vartaman Annual 1932, my friend, Dr. Banker M. D., has an interesting article on Ahura Mazda—the Omniscient,—The Lord of the Universe—in which the doctor seeks to show that the proofs of the existence of that Lord and those of the soul are as clear as the mid-day sun. He is rather contemptuous of those who cannot see these proofs as clearly as he does and refers to them as “only half-learned to show off the lack of learning by pretending to be learned,” though in that crowd are also to be found a few “learned ones”. Dr. Banker goes straight to the business by asking: “Who is God?” and answers that “according to the Zoroastrian religion Ahura Mazda is a spirit equal to the energy of our learned writers.” “There is no anthropomorphic trait,” says the doctor, “in the lofty conception of Ahura Mazda for he is devoid of all imperfections. According to Zarathustra, Ahura Mazda is to be seen or conceived only through the mind’s eye—that is the higher intelligence, attained by purity and perfect knowledge. The eye of the mind of Zarathustra not only saw that spirit clearly but also discerned its sex and state of perfection—“He is a Most Holy Spirit.” In discussing the question of the existence of God in our last July number we dealt only with the idea of God of the man in the street. We then said that the modern conception of God as the Cosmic Energy, the Supreme Intelligence, The Prime Mover, the First Cause does not concern him. Dr. Banker thinks that modern science confirms to the full the idea of Zarathustra but only calls that “Spirit” Energy in nature instead of God. After this prelude, the worthy doctor embarks on

the task of proving his point, namely, that the Energy of nature is God—the Creator of the Universe who controls everything. He is certain that that energy is endowed with superhuman Intelligence and he proceeds to give the reason why he thinks so. It is to state it briefly, that everything would be meaningless without a guiding hand and without a controller this world would be a chaos. Rather childish these ideas, but Dr. Banker thinks that the arguments he adduces are irrefutable. Imagine, he says, an engine travelling by its own energy, without a driver, a steamer without a captain, a motor-car without a chauffeur; can such a thing be conceived? Is it any wonder then that Dr. Banker is contemptuous of the half-learned who imagine that the energy of nature is non-intelligent? His own profound studies have led him to think that such a thing is inconceivable. Listen to what he says regarding the orderly course of the heavenly bodies. “Now if there were no guiding spirit of superintelligence anywhere in the heavens, what would be the consequences following the non-intelligent energy of our scientists and pseudo-scientists; well there would then be one end—Destruction. The stars and planets, the comets and the asteroids, our moon and earth, other moons and other earths, uncontrolled, would hit each other and collide with a force unheard of and undreamt of.” How stupid really of these half-learned not to have thought of that! They may plead that it is impossible to conceive this even with the mind’s eye—of Energy acting on matter. They would say that energy and force are still defined in every manual of Physics as abstract

ideas and not as realities. As Sir Oliver Lodge once said, the only realities known to the physicist are matter and movement; and it would obviously be better to say matter in motion or moving matter. The Physicist sees matter at rest (apparently) or doing work by movements. Its capacity, for doing work is its "energy"; when it is doing work it is displaying "force." They are defined as abstract ways of regarding the movements of matter " (McCabe). What really happens when matter is in motion is that energy is generated; what one sees is an agent, something acting and no one can see an action. Modern science tells us that this energy is electricity. Is Ahurā Mazda electricity? People, like Dr. Banker, who tell us that matter, unless guided or controlled, would be irregular or chaotic, talk pure nonsense, and the analogy they derive from machines, watches, etc., is fantastic. Paley's arguments to prove design in nature have been abandoned by the best of thinkers and are perfectly inapplicable to the Universe. I will again quote Mr. McCabe on the question. " Now, it seems clear that if a man asserts that the forces of the universe are naturally erratic, and may go in any one of a dozen directions unless they are guided, he must show cause for his opinion." Can Dr. Banker do this? " The man of science has never discovered an erratic force yet. Force always acts uniformly, always takes the same direction. If you say this is *only* because the natural forces are guided and controlled, and is not their proper and inherent nature, the man of science naturally asks: How do you know? Science sees nothing in nature to suggest such an idea." " When we consider the movements of the starry heavens today," says Mr. Mallock,

" instead of feeling it to be wonderful that they are absolutely regular, we should feel it to be wonderful if they were anything else. . . . we realize that order, instead of being the marvel of the Universe, is the indispensable condition of its existence—that it is a physical platitude and not a divine paradox." The fact is that Dr. Banker's notion of matter and force is a little antiquated and seems still to be at the stage where matter was considered as " dead like putty" and that force or energy is applied to it, and is not one of the attributes of the same reality. Apparent order certainly reigns in heaven, at least so far as our solar system is concerned. But there is every reason to think that it was not always so before it reached its present stable condition. According to the most eminent of modern astronomers the planets were born out of an awful disturbance, no less than a wandering star tearing chunks of matter out of the sun and flinging them in space. " Le soleil fut une fois en mal d'enfant et il donna naissance à une douzaine de petits" is a true saying. Some of these little ones like the asteroids have been destroyed in the same manner as some comets have been destroyed or have disappeared. Even on our own planet the succession of the seasons has not been always what it is now, and successive Ice Ages have destroyed more lives than what exist on our Earth now and fearful cataclysms have torn the face of our Earth. Whole continents have appeared and disappeared, and even now the occasional earthquakes we experience is a warning to us that things are not as orderly and equable as we imagine. Scientists tell us that there are many dead stars wandering in space and that

they collide to form new bodies. The succession of living beings on our planet does not show intelligence. Nature was evidently trying her prentice hands and failed often. Imagine those awful prehistoric monsters being the work of an intelligent being ! Go to a museum and see them !

It is difficult to imagine Ahura-Mazda as a Creator and yet having no anthropomorphic traits about him. Is he in nature or behind nature ? How can such an impersonal energy be omniscient and superintelligent. Evidently Dr. Banker thinks there is no difficulty in conceiving such an existence and probably he does not realise he is only repeating a theological jargon which is really meaningless. He also assumes that he knows the very essence of matter, the ultimate reality which is rather dogmatic on his part.

After this, it is not surprising that he repeats all the ready-made phrases he has heard from the Mobeds about the existence of the soul which leaves the human body to depart heavenwards after death, etc. This, from a medical man, is rather deplorable. What does he think the soul is ? He attributes all the functions of the body to the agency of that entity. What about the animals who have also the same functions ? Have they no soul ? What sort of a thing is it that finds its way heavenwards after death ? What is heavenwards ; where is that ? Is it in space among the millions of stars ? Does Dr. Banker think that the Aborigine of Australia or the Pigmy of Africa, who is almost on a level with

the Anthropoids, proclaims the existence of a soul in him simply because he is endowed with certain physiological functions. What about those of the Anthropoids ? I am sure, in reply, he may tell us that man is a rational being and so forth and the Anthropoids are not. Would not a study of comparative psychology enlighten him a little on the subject and make him less ready to proclaim his religious views on the subject ? One remarks in the long article he has contributed to the Sanj Vartaman that he is silent over the problem of Evil on earth except to put it to the count of Angra-Mainya—the Satan of Zoroastrianism. No sound thinker would blink at the question in this manner, and it is rather a primitive way of explaining things to saddle all that is bad and unpleasant on the back of a mysterious being who is eternally in conflict with the Creator. Dr. Banker laments that men are becoming irreligious and that moral degeneracy is increasing in the world. Was the world more moral when men were more religious than now ? Were our ancestors purer, less brutal and selfish than us though they had more religion in them than us ? Is it religion that has civilized the world ; made men more tolerant than our ancestors ? Dr. Banker talks freely of Ahura-Mazda creating the world. How did that happen ? Can he conceive of a time when nothing, not even the void existed ? All these difficulties do not appear formidable to Doctor Banker and evidently he thinks that only the half learned entertain them.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

TRUTH OR LIES.

The truth is a vital matter for every man and woman. No one but a fool desires anything else, and only a rogue aims at telling the people a lie. And thousands of writers and speakers assure us that of all truths the most important is the truth about religion. Are we getting it? Let us see.

Many people look to the priest for the truth about their religion. Does one really get it? Do you think it is in their interests that the priests should tell you the truth about religion? What does an unbiased search into their records prove to us? That they are the very last to tell us what is the Truth. Very probably many may not even know themselves what the truth is! We are not fighting against that, but what of the many who know the truth and will not tell?

Let us make no mistake about this point. The obvious and avowed purpose of the clergy is to see that a certain view of religion is maintained, whether that view be true or false. If every one of the clergy told all he believed about religion, a great many of them would be compelled to leave the Church all together. His position is secure only so long as he continues to be silent. Every clergyman is a briefed advocate pleading a cause he is paid to uphold. It is true that he may believe sincerely in it, but of this no one can be certain so long as self-interest runs with professed conviction.

One can safely say that what applies, say for example to the Christian religion and its priests, applies equally to ALL other religions and their priests.

Look at their record with reference to their own religion. They told us that every word of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, was inspired of God. Who believes that to-day? They taught that the world was made in six days, that man was made from the dust of the earth, that woman was made from a bone taken from the side of man, that languages originated at the Tower of Babel, that plagues and pestilences come from God, that prayer could cure the sick. Who believes in these things nowadays? Every school child knows that they are not true. And it is the same with many other things that one might name. The Churches taught that the earth was the centre of the solar system and tortured and imprisoned men and women for contradicting them. They opposed uniformity in geology and evolution in biology. These, to-day, are commonplaces. The things which the Churches damned as heresies are, to-day, the accepted maxims of civilized thinkers.

Even on the general nature of religion there is the same lesson. Nearly all that we know of the origin of religious ideas, of their development and history, has been taught us by those who have been denounced as heretics by the Churches. What the Churches have done is to oppose, to denounce, to misrepresent, and to persecute. They gave way only when the force of public opinion allowed them no longer to oppose with safety.

Even to-day the religious are spending millions and millions of rupees annually on the upkeep of their religions. For Christianity they are derived from all sorts of Church Rates, Mining Royalties, Rents, centuries old Taxes etc., and

what is more they are levied on persons whether they believe in Christianity or not! Moreover there is preferential treatment for every Church and Chapel—they do not ask for it gracefully but have the impertinence to demand it in the name of the Lord! It is a form of endowment by which all are made to contribute to the upkeep of a Church whether they believe in its teachings or not. There are also huge sums of money that are voluntarily given to the Churches. There are several millions sent for the upkeep of the foreign missionary movement. If Christianity be not true all this represents an enormous waste of our national resources. And you cannot know whether it is true or not until you know all that is to be said against it. Until you know that you may be paying for the upkeep of a *lie*, subsidizing the maintenance of an imposture.

There are several organizations in the world that rest upon a basis of advanced and uncompromising Freethought. There is the national Secular Society founded over fifty years ago by the late Charles Bradlaugh, and of which he continued as the President until just before his death; the Rationalist Press Association of London, the Rationalist Associations of India, South Africa, Australia, the Association for the Advancement of Athesim in America and many others all over the world. The aim of almost all these Societies is to direct attention to the fact that man's first concern should be the world in which he is now living, the life that he is now leading in common with his fellow men and women. Whether there is a God or not, Man at least is reality. Whether there is another life or not, this world is a fact. Secularism, or Rationalism or Freethought, as one of its

earliest-exponents said, is a creed that saves God trouble. It proposes to do with the aid of human strength and human intelligence what so many generations have vainly asked the Gods to do. It does not sing to an imaginary God "When wilt thou save thy people"? but says that if the people are to be saved they must save themselves. That is an attitude that can injure no one in heaven, and may easily benefit all on earth.

But if we are to make the most of this world, if we are to exhaust its possibilities for improvement, it is necessary that we should all know the truth about religion. If the truth is only what the priests tell us then we are paying too little attention to it. If they are not telling us the truth then we are paying it far too much attention. And no one can be sure of either position so long as he continues to follow in the path marked out for him by his predecessors and declines to examine later and probably more accurate views. The world moves in the light of a larger knowledge and of wider views. Things that were good enough for our ancestors are not good enough for us, and it is well that they should not be. We do not eat the same kind of food as did our ancestors, we do not live in the same kind of houses or hold the same views of the world and of man. Why should we act otherwise in the case of religion? The man who said that an undressed animal's skin was good enough for clothing, or a mud-hut good enough to live in merely because they were good enough for his ancestors, would be looked upon as a fool. Why should we act otherwise with regard to religion? If our ancestors were mistaken with regard to the world in which they were actually living, is it not more than likely they were mistaken

about another world of which they know absolutely nothing? There is no royal road to truth. Trial and error is the only road by which man has travelled from savagery to civilization. And the religions of to-day are no more than the reflection of views of the universe struck out in the infancy of the race.

It is your business, it is your vital interest to know the truth. And the truth is to be gained only by making acquaintance with contrasted views. It can never be gained by resting content with the ideas implanted in you during your young and uncritical years, or by sitting tamely at the feet of a body of men whose position is bound up with the maintenance of the views that are being called in question. It is these very men who are on trial; it is their official teaching that is challenged, and which is being rejected by some of the most advanced and the most enlightened minds all over the

civilized world. The claim of religion is for belief, the claim of Rationalism is for examination. No man or woman should be satisfied with less, none should submit to the insult implied in asking for more.

If, therefore, you are interested in knowing the truth about religion, write to the Hon. Secretary, The Rationalist Association of India, Queen's Road, Bombay for particulars of the aims and objects of the Society and conditions of membership. Tell your news agent to get you copy of "Reason" published monthly, price 0-4-0 or send your name and address to the Hon. Secretary and a copy will be sent free. In no other way will you be able to truly claim that your opinions, whatever they be, have been formed on the basis of a knowledge of both sides.

D. R. D. WADIA.

FREEMASONRY.

1. The General Background of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry is a world-wide cult of the "magical" type. It originated in England at the beginning of the 18th century. There are many rival organisations of Freemasons, but the Grand Lodge of England regards itself as the only true repository of masonic ritual and philosophy. English Grand Lodge acknowledges certain foreign grand lodges as daughter organisations, and is also affiliated to grand lodges of numerous "Side Orders." The number of "irregular" and heretical masonic lodges greatly exceeds the

number of "regular" lodges recognised by the Grand Lodge of England. Orthodox English Freemasons, however, deny or ignore this fact. They pretend that no one outside their order can possibly know the true secrets of Freemasonry. This is a rather ridiculous pretension, for the philosophy of Freemasonry is a rehash of the primitive ideas of countless similar mystical societies: esoteric ideas that have been common property all over the world for many centuries. The rituals are even less exclusive, for they are poor reconstructions and imitations of numerous ancient secret ceremonies, imperfectly gleaned from many sources by

many 'prentice' hands. Freemasonry, in short, contains nothing novel or impressive to the practised student of religious and magical phenomena. It is a poor, clumsy, watered-down, Westernised version of the widespread secret rites of antiquity.

English Freemasonry, and the systems deriving from it, has always been "respectable," Deistic, and smug. English Freemasons have always shown due reverence for the aristocracy, and have always loved to have a Duke for Grand Master. The great expansion of English Freemasonry dates from 1868, when the Prince of Wales joined an irregular lodge in the course of a lark. Grand Lodge did not neglect this golden opportunity. Waving all rules and principles, it insisted that the Prince had become a valid mason, inveigled him to a general assembly, passed him through all the degrees in a single evening, and made him Grand Master. This piece of opportunism much annoyed his royal mother, but the end of the Grand Lodge was served. Freemasonry became patriotic. Aspiring small tradesmen, and thousands of members of the lower middle class, flocked into the lodges. This class still supplies most of rank and file of Freemasonry. Its members know little or nothing about the inner meaning of the order. They seldom pass beyond the third degree. To them, Freemasonry is a benevolent organisation, teaching excellent moral maxims, and affording flattering opportunities for being "brotherly" with social superiors. It enables them to wear evening dress and sit at banquets, plus the mild excitement of taking part in a mysterious and impressive ritual. They do not quite know what it is all about, and usually have difficulty in remembering their words, but they are convinced that Freemasonry

represents a higher form of morality and knowledge, which sets them apart from the common herd. It also makes them superstitiously careful about the observance of a few elementary principles of decency in everyday life; chiefly, of course, in dealings with other masons. They do derive some business and social advantages by claiming brotherhood with fellow-masons, but less than is generally supposed. In fact, the rank-and-file mason, to his chagrin, finds his duty to consist chiefly in lifelong payment of rather heavy dues. A mason may neglect a good many precepts, but to be "in default" is very heinous, rendering him a sneaking outcast.

By contrast with the English organisation, Continental Freemasonry is revolutionary, atheistical, and anti-clerical. Continental lodges have a strong political flavour, and their activities are usually anathema to the smug English Freemason.

The "Antient and Accepted Rite" of the Grand Lodge of England is a system of thirty-three degrees, but not all the degrees are worked. There are additional systems of Freemasonry recognised by Grand Lodge, through which masons may pass after reaching given stages of initiation into the Antient and Accepted Rite. Among the additional systems, the Mark group comprises two Mark degrees, the Royal Ark Mariner with four allied degrees, the two degrees of the Secret Monitor, and seven attached degrees. The Royal Arch is another separate system, claiming to reveal the true secrets of a Master Mason. Other recognised "side degrees" include the four Cryptic degrees, three Templar degrees, two degrees of the Royal Order of Scotland, and two unattached degrees, the Red Cross of Constantine and the Knight of

St. John. Finally, there are nine Rosicrucian degrees.

The mainstay of the masonic organisation is the Craft Lodge, the lodge which works the first three degrees. Each lodge is a self-contained unit, and several are to be found in every large town. Anyone may start a lodge, but lodges wishing to be recognised by the Grand Lodge of England must be commenced in a "regular" way, pay dues, and submit to discipline. Otherwise the lodge is "irregular" or "Cowan," must stand on its own foot and suffer the disapproval and opposition of "Accepted" lodges. Some lodges are poor, and some rich, and in spite of the brotherly sentiments of Freemasonry, a good deal of class distinction obtains. There are lodges which exclude all who are not military officers in the Guards, and others which admit only rich men. In a city like Bombay there are lodges whose members are chiefly Indians, and others whose members are chiefly military subordinates, and others whose members are chiefly "burra sahibs." Should a member of one of the first lodges present himself at the last, he would be acknowledged as a brother, but as a rather distant one. The "brotherly" ritual would be observed in full, yet the intruder would doubtless feel out of place.

Historical and philosophical reasons make it desirable to treat Craft Freemasonry as a separate system. Fundamentally, the Craft is not a Christian cult. A candidate may pass through the first three degrees and retain non-Christian beliefs: it is sufficient that he acknowledges a Supreme Being, a "Great Architect of the Universe." Historically, Freemasonry is deistic and not Christian, and the deistic principle is retained in the Craft Degrees. The so-called "higher degrees,"

on the other hand, have imported a Christian element into the original Freemasonry, and to enter many of the degrees a candidate must be a professing Christian. It is all very illogical, being in fact the residuum of many years controversy and schism, but the fact remains that Christianity has gained a firm hold on the "higher degrees," which must therefore be worked in separate lodges, as also to preserve their secrets from the lower brethren. Many masons of the first three degrees are unaware that these degrees are non-Christian and even historically anti-Christian, and Christian clergymen frequently act as Chaplains to Craft lodges!

The Craft lodges in a district owe allegiance to a District Grand Lodge, composed mainly of the Masters of individual lodges. District Grand Lodges again combine to form Provincial Grand Lodges, until finally Grand Lodge itself is reached. Historically, these District and Provincial grand lodges are interlopers, created at various times to provide office and preferment for local masonic magnates, and the ordinary Craft and other lodges claim direct access to, and representation in, the highest governing body.

Each Craft lodge works under a Master, who personifies the Almighty. His chief assistants are the Senior and Junior Wardens, who have various ritual duties, that are other aspects of the Deity. The Senior Warden, for example, is a kind of Shiva, the Ender of Time, who is armed with the running noose of death. The Junior Warden is more of a Vishnu, a sustainer and preserver, who helps and safeguards the candidate, and calls the brothers from labour to refreshment. The most Junior officer is the Tyler, who

guards the entrance to the lodge with drawn sword. There are also such officers as secretary, and treasurer. Lodges of the "higher" degrees have a similar organisation, though the number and designation of the officers vary, according to the philosophy and requirements of the degree.

The nature of the various degrees will, however, be discussed in further articles. We will also examine their rather diverting history, and the historical facts of

the origin and growth of Freemasonry itself. In addition, it will be interesting to trace the sources from which the eighteenth-century Freemasons derived their rather muddled creed and ritual. As the intelligent reader may well suspect, these sources lead us back to primitive man, via most of the superstitious mystical and symbolic nonsense of the ancient world.

EMBUSQUE.

THE GIFT.

This is the story of a simple-minded fellow.

He was leading a quiet and contented existence, attending to his business, deriving keen pleasure from his few hobbies; doing the right thing by his neighbour and harming none. His manner was so unassuming that for a long time society took no particular notice of him, being fully occupied with sports, tournaments, cinema, Jazz and—greatest fun of all—politicians. Then suddenly somebody noticed a peculiarity about him. This was nothing less than the fact that in a much-married society he had somehow or other contrived to remain a bachelor. This discovery was the end of his peace of mind. Strangers looked at him queerly, acquaintances threw broad hints, friends pestered him with advice and relations bullied him day and night, until he agreed to enter the state of matrimony. But the choice of a suitable bride was no easy matter. Suggestions there were in plenty, but here the conditions were impossible, there the marriage

endowment prohibitive. To make an end of it all, he decided to consult Tradition and benefit by her life-long wisdom and experience.

He had no difficulty in finding her abode; almost the first man in the street, whom he asked, led him to it. The house was very old and in terrible state of neglect, but it was large and bore unmistakable signs of past grandeur. He entered timidly. Inside, it was dark and gloomy and cold, as most of the windows had long since been shut up to prevent even sunlight from connecting it with the outside world. In the hey-day of its prime it must have been a place fit for kings to live in. Faint decorations were still visible here and there on the crumbling walls, and some fountains still held up their spouts proudly above the undergrowth in the courtyard garden. But the walls were damaged by spider's webs and ant's nests, and the garden was full of poisonous weeds. As he was crossing the corridor adjoining the deso-

late garden, a huge bat flew past him, sending a cold shiver down his spine.

He found Tradition in a back-room of the house, which was even darker than the others and full of pungent smoke. She was bending over a cauldron, preparing a meal of what looked to him horribly like human brains. Her two children Ignorance and Superstition, were playing in one corner at a stupid but dangerous game.

"What do you want of me?" she croaked, when she became aware of his existence.

He explained the object of his visit.

She left her erstwhile occupation and ambled to him, murmuring "Very well, I will find a suitable bride for you, one

who will bring you social status, plenty of money and powerful relations. She is a foster-daughter of mine and is therefore innocent of all these new-fangled ideas and modern notions. But I will do so on one condition."

"What is it?" the man asked nervously.

"Do not be afraid" she replied "It is quite simple. You must promise always to wear, next to your heart, a little gift I will make you on your wedding day."

He promised.

* * * *

On the appointed day she made him a gift of Lifelong Misery.

NAZIR AHMED.

THE RELIGIOUS HALLUCINATION.

An obvious way for a journal to get up a circulation is to lend its support to popular superstitions. It may be said that is not a very high type of journalism, but it is a very common type and has a most pernicious influence on semi-educated readers, the more so when it is intended for children. A Poona monthly for children, the "Bala-Bodha" publishes a summary of the life of Swami Ramtirtha, whom the author calls one of the four great Sadhus of modern times, the other three being Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi has fortunately not fallen into the religious excesses of the other three.

Swami Ramtirtha failed once at the B. A. examination because he took up Sanscrit for the first time, but topped the list

later at the M. A. examination with Mathematics and became a professor. The author informs us that as a student he was very poor, was married very early and had to live on nine pies a day and also that God inspired some of the professors to pay his fees. One wonders why he did not make him rich at once and have done with it!

Soon after his appointment as a professor, he got a religious fit, gave up his job and went to the Himalayas to do penance. He sat there and determined not to leave till he had seen God. Of course when anybody is very obstinate, God is obliged to show himself to prevent him from losing faith, and in this case he did so in September 1898. In 1901, Ramtirtha became a Sanyasi and toured all the Himalayan sacred places on foot. A

petty chief there became his disciple and at his advice, the Swami went to Japan and America to preach Hinduism. He had nothing except the piece of cloth he wore when he reached America, but naturally the very first man he met there provided him with everything and even President Roosevelt went to see him. Once when he was in a trance, an atheistic American lady went to see him, and when the trance was over, she professed herself converted. (What an Atheist!)

In 1904 he returned to India and after a preaching tour all over the country, went to the Himalayas again and studied the Vedas in a cottage built for him by the petty chief, who apparently also provided him with a cook. The swami once went to the river with this cook to take his bath, when a stone slipped under his foot and he was carried away by the current never to appear again. The author says he went down with the sacred syllable "Om" on his lips (which was perhaps only 'Oh!'), pretending that he must have done this on purpose. These Sadhus are always supposed to die at their own sweet will when they get tired of the world. He was only 33 when he died, but being a particularly sacred person, must have found the world too impure to live in. As his mission in life is supposed to have been to enlighten his fellow-creatures one fails to see why he could not do it a little longer. Or did he die by an accident after all? But no, God would never allow an accident to happen to the faithful!

All Sadhus, both the sincere ones and the cheats, see God some time or other. The cheats, ofcourse, have to pretend that they can see him at their will and even arrange an interview for others sometimes

because otherwise people would have no faith in them. But there is no doubt that some Sadhus are perfectly sincere when they say that they have seen God. What happens to them? They simply get a hallucination. A hallucination is a very strange phenomenon, and people who have never felt anything of the kind find it very difficult to believe in the possibility of a hallucination. It may affect any sense, hearing, sight, smell or taste. The person affected may be perfectly normal in every other respect and may be able to speak intelligently on any topic except the subject of his hallucination. There, he firmly insists that he sees something or hears some sound which only exists in his imagination, where no body else sees or hears anything.

In ordinary cases, other people can easily see that it is a hallucination, but in the case of a religious hallucination, when a person says that he or she sees God or hears supernatural sounds, there is no way of verifying it, because God is supposed to have the power of being visible to some persons and at the same time invisible to others. Such people can therefore easily cheat themselves and others into the belief that they possess special supernatural powers of sight and hearing. Gullible people easily believe this, while a rationalist will call it a hallucination if he knows that the man is sincere. This is how the existence of God appears a well-established fact not only to people who are themselves affected by hallucinations, but even to others who believe them to be perfectly sincere and not all likely to tell lies. Unscientific people even argue that if an obviously sincere person is believed by judges in a law-court, why should the same standard not be applied here? They forget that however honest a man may be, he may

be subject to hallucinations and has no means of verifying this. They go on to argue that one can acquire the necessary supernatural powers by penance and that you cannot expect to get anything unless you take the trouble. You will not take the trouble unless you are mad enough, but if you are, you will of course see God just as you want to see him when your imagination has been sufficiently worked up. This is in fact how so many different forms of God must have arisen. The imagination works as in a dream and produces fantastic forms, a human body with an elephant's head, or extra hands and feet as are found on many Hindu Gods. All these became different Gods and philosophers pretended that they are only different forms of the same universal God.

Where there is a strong will to believe, argument is of no avail, but to anybody who really wants to find out the truth, a study of hallucinations is indispensable. It will explain how grossly absurd statements came to be commonly believed by people who are to all appearances reasonable in other matters, but who will not listen to argument where religion is concerned. I knew a religious gentleman who is now dead, who resolutely refused to read rationalistic literature because he was afraid that it might possibly make him change his views. But people can of course decide for themselves whether they prefer religion or knowledge.

R. D. KARVE.

THE HISTORY OF THE ALPHABET.

The story of the development of the alphabetical signs is extremely interesting. Few, however, are those who ever reflect on the origin and meaning of the twenty-six conventional signs of which our written and spoken language is composed. It appears strange that through the various combinations of twenty-six symbols, all the many millions of volumes, scarcely two alike, in the British Museum, owe their existence. The Oxford philologist, Max Muller, once stated that "by putting together twenty-three or twenty-four letters in every possible variety, we might produce every word that has ever been used in any language in the world. The number of these words, taking twenty-three letters as the basis, would be 25, 852, 016, 738, 884, 976, 640,000; or, if we took twenty-four, would be 620, 443,

401, 733, 239, 439, 360,000; but, even these trillions, billions and millions of sounds would not be words, because they would lack the most important ingredient—that which makes a word to be a word—namely, the different ideas by which they are called into life, and which are expressed differently in different languages."

Letters form words, and many of our commonest words represent what Trench once termed "fossil history." For example, the word "book" is derived from Anglo-Saxon *boe*, a "beech," for the bark of that tree was made into tablets "on which written characters were inscribed." Again, as Clodd notes in his volume on the Alphabet, that ancient pen the stylus, "illustrates the

passage of the language from the concrete to the abstract in its application to the way in which a writer expresses his ideas. We speak of his 'style,' just as we say, 'he wields an able pen,' this word being derived from the Latin *penna*, 'a feather.' The phrase *lapsus calami*, 'a slip of the pen,' preserves record of the use of a reed (Latin (*calamus*), which also survives in 'quill' from Old English *quyelle*, "a reed,"

The part played by the written word in the progress of civilization is inestimable. Apart from human power to treasure and record its manifold efforts and achievements civilization could neither have been attained nor preserved. Yet, from humble beginnings, all the letters of ancient and modern languages have been elaborated. In many communities, present and past, tangible objects have been, and are employed as messages of records. Even with a race so highly cultured as the ancient Peruvians knotted cords known as "quippus" served as aids to memory. Single, double, or multiple knots represented stated numbers, while the colours of the quippus denoted different meanings. Another mnemonic or memory assisting device was used by the Red Indians. This was the *wampum*, a belt ornamented with shells and beads so arranged as to record events or rights to land. Among ourselves a knot is sometimes tied in a handkerchief as an aid to memory. From earliest Egypt to contemporary savagery, the use of looped and knotted cords as memory aids is evident. A curious survival of this primitive practice was the exchequer tally still in use in the nineteenth century. Indeed, so great was the accumulation of tally sticks that they were used as fuel in belated Government offices, and the overheating of the

stoves led to the burning of the Houses of Parliament in 1834.

Pictorial devices have been extensively utilized both as records and as aids to memory. As the centuries roll on the picture reaches a representative stage when it becomes transformed into a symbol, in which, for instance, an arrow is used to denote an enemy or a bee is drawn to personify industry. An Indian pipe is regarded as an emblem of amity, while a whip indicates power.

Ideographic characters seemingly arose from the purely pictorial. An ideograph has been described as "a drawing representing not a sound, or even a word, but an idea. Thus the drawing of a man with protruding ribs represents famine; of a man with tears dropping from it, sorrow."

From the ideographic, a transitional system was evolved. Six different communities in various regions of the globe, while retaining the ideograph, also introduced symbols of a distinctly phonetic character, and the two functioned side by side. These six schemes probably arose independently and comprise the Sumerian and Babylonian, the Egyptian, Hittite, the Chinese, as also the script of the Aztecs and Mayas of pre-Columbian America.

In order of ascending evolution the phonetic system next appears. In this stage the phonogram, or sound representing sign becomes prominent. With a verbal scheme a sound-sign represents a complete word; in the syllabic, a sound-sign represents syllables; while, finally, in an alphabetic scheme a sound-sign is used for each vowel or consonant.

Reviewing the several stages in order of evolution we note that the pictorial

sign suggests the thing represented. Then the picture sign serving as visual picture suggests the name, while in the phonetic the sign functions as an ear picture, which suggests the sound. This phonetic system possesses the important advantage that constant signs are chosen to stand for constant sounds. It is claimed that by these means "the intellectual progress of the human race was assured, because only thereby was the preservation of all that is of abiding value made possible. In brief, the origin of the alphabet was due to the ingenious discovery that, all the words which men utter being expressed by a few sounds, symbols of these could be selected accordingly; hence the twenty-six letters of the alphabet make up the half million words contained in the Oxford Dictionary."

Much remains to be determined concerning the primary source of the earliest characters from which the English and allied alphabets have been derived. It appears established that the historic Greeks were indebted to the trading and travelling Phœnicians for their letters. For the Phœnician script certainly dates back very many centuries B. C. Yet it is improbable that these letters were indigenous in Phœnicia. The epoch-making discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans in Crete make clear the existence in prehistoric ages of a Minoan system of pictographic writing. This, in the later Middle Minoan period, had developed into an abridged hieroglyphic system which, in its turn, became transformed in late Minoan times into two different kinds of script.

It is therefore quite arguable that the maritime Phœnicians may have gained their alphabet from the Minoan peoples of Crete. The excavations at Knossos in Crete not only demonstrate the existence of a splendid island culture, but also indicate that centuries before the Phœnicians went down to the sea in ships the Cretan peoples were in constant communication, both culturally and commercially with Syria, Greece, Egypt, and other near Eastern lands.

Happily, when the Phœnicians diffused their alphabet the Greeks were the first recipients of the gift. Other races that received it, retained it unimproved. The Greeks on the contrary, enriched the then consonantal alphabet by adding letters to serve as vowels so "that there might be a visible sign for every audible sound of human voice." Furthermore, they turned superfluous gutturals and sibilants to useful purposes and completed their improvements by ultimately transposing the Phœnician (Semitic) custom of writing from right to left to that of left to right.

Still, the Latin alphabet ranks above all others in efficiency. Several scripts, the Phœnician among them, were once employed in the Italian peninsula but all have perished save the Latin. When once attained, the ascendancy of the Latins made their alphabet supreme in Italy. It was destined to become the official script of the Roman Empire and thus spread far and near. Later, when made the mouthpiece of the Catholic Church it was firmly established throughout the Western World. Apparently, the earliest Indo-European language comprised twelve consonants and three vowels (i, a and u). It was in Latin that the *e* and *o* were added. Other improvements were also introduced, but the languages lost its purity with the barbarian invasions, the downfall of Pagan civilization and culture, and the triumph of the Church.

At last civilization re-emerged from the ruins, and there slowly arose from the dialects of the Romance races, whose tongue was derived from the language of ancient Rome, the Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Roumanian, as written and spoken to-day. The glories and beauties of French, Italian, and other Romance literature thus repose on the priceless legacy of language bequeathed by the Latin race of old.

T. F. PALMER.
in "The Free-Thinker."

CORRESPONDENCE.

Bombay, 10th Sept. 1932.

The Editor, "REASON"

Sir,

Recent events in Bombay should make members of the Parsi community think furiously. The cowardly and brutal assault on a Parsi girl by a gang of Parsi roughs and the tragic suicide of her Hindu fiance should open the eyes of all thinking Parsis as to where blind fanaticism is leading the community. Indeed, the details brought out at the Coroner's Inquest on young Kulkarni's body are bad enough.

What has become of individual liberty, of safety of person and the inviolability of the home when a young couple contemplating a respectable marriage are left at the mercy of the worst elements in society?

When a negro is lynched in America by a 'white' mob for assaulting a 'white' girl, the whole world holds up its hands in horror and points the finger of scorn at these half-civilized Yankees. What state of savagery are the Parsis living in then when the lives of a Parsi girl and a Hindu youth are in danger at the hands of members of the Parsi community when their only crime is to contemplate nothing less respectable than a *marriage*?

It is not good enough to say it is the work of a gang of hooligans such as was

responsible for the disgraceful scenes at the Royal Opera House last year. Has a single prominent Parsi come forward in the press and denounced these criminal acts or pleaded for a little tolerance? On the contrary, the yellow press is inflaming communal passions still further. It is time that the better minds of the community asserted itself and drew back from the path of goondaism and murder into which it is being led. Do the Parsis not care for their fair name as a civilized and cultured community any longer? The news of the Parsis not having degenerated, according to Sir Dinshaw Mulla, is blazoned forth from the four corners of the globe, but events like this hardly substantiate this boast.

If those in the know regarding this tragedy are in possession of more facts, but for want of reliable friends are loth to divulge them, I am sure if they got in touch with the Rationalist Assn : of India or their members, they would only be too pleased to fight their case. I do feel sure the R. A. I. or its members would be quite willing to give proper advice and all help that may be in their power to give to anybody in similar situations.

Yours etc.,

D. R. D. WADIA.

The Editor, "Reason"

Dear Sir,

I admire the courage with which Mr. Ali Akbar has penned a note under the caption 'The Communal Question' in the September issue of this monthly.

I think the encouragement that he gives to Parsi Ladies to marry into other communities ought to have been given to ladies of all communities, and more so to Muslim ladies. The Safeguards demanded by Muslim delegates at the Round Table Conference to protect their *religion*, while Parsi delegates did nothing of the sort, shows that Muslims are more religiously minded than the Parsis. If intercommunal marriages are desirable to break down the communal and reli-

gious barriers, then I would strongly urge Mr. Ali Akbar to give every possible encouragement to cultured Muslim ladies to discard their religion and marry into other communities, particularly the Parsis, as then these ladies will be free from seclusion and dogma, and also because the Parsis are more rationally, and less religiously minded than others. I think a day will come when educated Muslim ladies of noble families would marry in hundreds into Parsi and other communities, since they, more than the ladies of any other community, require freedom from the purdah and religious bigotry, whereas the Parsi ladies have already achieved this freedom.

Yours faithfully,
SOHRAB H. BATLIVALA.

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"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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[Monthly ;

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hon'y. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

FALLACIES IN DR. BANKER'S REPLY.

In our last issue, an article by Dr. S. A. Banker, M.D. was published in reply to my criticism of his dualistic conception of matter and energy. As Dr. Banker, himself, frankly says it was he who asked me to read his article in the *Sanj Vartaman* in the hope, I believe, that I would find it a scientific one proving the existence of an Omniscient God.

I read it, but unfortunately did not find it so and I ventured to point out some fallacies in it. I am sorry to find that in his reply he accuses me of ridiculing him and stresses the point by remarking that "Ridicule and invectives are not arguments, but the weapons used by the vanquished". I am afraid Dr. Banker in saying this was only trying to be a

little theatrical by quoting the familiar tag of lawyers when they wish to deprecate the other side. I can assure Dr. Banker that I am never in the habit of ridiculing an opponent in a serious controversy, and I am sure he will be hard put to it to point out where I did so in my article. I may here frankly say that, this controversy is hardly interesting to me, familiar as I am with the worn-out kind of arguments used by Dr. Banker. In now replying to his last article my object is just to show him how weak are his arguments and how erroneous it is for him to imagine that ninety per cent of scientists are on his side. Where on earth did he get his statistics? We have seen that he holds firmly to the view that matter and energy are two different things altogether, and that the latter would be inert if it was not animated by Ahura-Mazda, the Omniscient God. He claims scientific support for this belief, but science gives no such support to this supernaturalistic view. As Prof. H. Levy, the distinguished professor of Physics and Mathematics in the University of London says:—

.....“Rationalism asserts that supernaturalism can find no place in a civilized World Theory. For the practice of mankind has shown that there is no human activity that achieves its purpose by “Divine” intervention. Successful sciences like Physics, Chemistry and Biology can call no such aid. Engineers bend the material forces of Nature to the needs of Man, with no thought of spiritual help. Man organizes his life relying only on the powers of Man; matter is conquered by matter. The history of human progress is the history of the emancipation of man from Supernaturalism. Rationalism is therefore not an axiom, but a conclusion; not an unestab-

lished theory, but a fact of world practice. As such it must find its place in the finished statement that summates the rational experience of mankind. It is a factor in cultural understanding.”

I am afraid Dr. Banker has been rather impressed by the fantastic reports of some newspapers and magazines regarding the latest discoveries and alleged confusions about the composition of the atoms, the phenomena of light, the non-existence of the ether and the so-called mathematical formula of the structure of the Universe, etc. There is a lot of loose talk about modern science having annihilated the Materialism of the nineteenth century and religion, as usual, is making much of the irresponsible utterances of some scientists with mystical and metaphysical tendencies on these questions. This is pure moonshine. Radio-activity which is supposed to have upset the old views on matter and energy has done nothing of the kind. It has done absolutely nothing to make one doubt the inherent properties of matter and the necessity of admitting a supernatural agency to account for natural phenomena. As Professor J. W. Hickson, of Cambridge University reminds us in the latest Rationalist Annual:—

“On its first formulation the Theory of Relativity appeared to bring confusion into and completely overthrow the “Classical” physics of Galileo and Newton; but gradually it has come to be regarded as the extreme development and crowning of the older physics, and not in essential conflict with them. It has touched in a fundamental way on the problems of space, time, causality and the cosmological problem, which have been among the most important questions in modern theoretical philosophy. It has united the concepts of space and time,

and, in conjunction with an electronic theory of matter, those of mass and energy, whereby a long standing dualism between the ponderables and imponderables has been overcome. Withal it has upheld the view that the structure of the physical world is such that it constitutes a self determined system, in which the behaviour of every element and every process is regulated according to the principle of causality, the principle of the uni-determinism of changes."

Dr. Banker, however, knows better. He does not think that Science is even on the fringe of things. Scientists, he says, do not agree even among themselves and consequently he is sure that it is Ahura-Mazda, the Super-Intelligent Spirit who is responsible for the orderly phenomena of Nature. It is interesting to learn from him how Ahura-Mazda operates. According to Dr. Banker it is all so very simple. He finds an analogy with the works of man; that's all. When a man constructs a machine, works and controls it, one cannot see his intelligence or spirit behind or in the machine. This is invisible. It is the same with Nature. One cannot see the spirit of Ahura-Mazda but we can see his works. We must be very, very dull, indeed, not to see a thing so plain, so clear in fact, that our friends the early men, or their living representatives the Polynesians or the Bushmen saw it as easily as does Dr. Banker. Yet, we venture to say that despite this ingenious analogy of Dr. Banker, this idea of a supernatural agency responsible for natural phenomena cannot stand for a moment the test of serious thought. The difficulty of conceiving Ahura-Mazda operating outside Nature or behind the Universe as they say, becomes the greater when we remember that Dr. Banker says that

Ahura-Mazda is a spirit without any anthropomorphic trait. How then can we conceive an impersonal spirit or power guiding and controlling Nature? In the case of man his spirit or intelligence is embodied in his personality. It is with his hands that he constructs and guides the machines his intelligence has invented. His intelligence or mind is dependent on his brain and we always find that brain and mind are intimately correlated. What about Ahura-Mazda's brain; does that exist? Can we conceive an impersonal spirit, whatever that is, acting by will alone? How does will power control and guide the atoms? How can it make the Earth and other planets wheel round the Sun? Does Ahura-Mazda occasionally give a gentle kick to Mother Earth to keep her going round? Of course not; we forget that Ahura-Mazda has no feet, but Dr. Banker doubtless, can explain this more satisfactorily.

Let us assume for the sake of argument that Man imitates Nature and Nature is only the manifestation of Ahura-Mazda's will. That is to say, without Ahura-Mazda no phenomena would occur in the Universe as it is impossible for it to be self-regulating and self-sustaining. Let us picture Ahura-Mazda doing something—producing wind for instance.. When a man wants to produce a little breeze to cool his overheated room he constructs an electric fan. This, he can regulate as he likes. By means of a lever he can make it go slow, or fast and he can start and stop it, in other words, control it as he likes, Ahura-Mazda to produce wind on a cosmical scale must be doing the same. The Pagans also thought of that problem. They invented a god to account for every phenomenon. Aeolus,

son of Hippotas, was the god of the winds and he produced them from a bag. That was all wrong of course; wind is produced by a fan. So, to produce it Ahura must have constructed a gigantic fan, so gigantic that the imagination of man cannot realize its dimensions. Any how, it must have been a fan far superior to anything man can ever construct in this line. Ahura, to be sure, can let his fan go slow and lo! we have a zephyr, at moderate speed—a gentle, refreshing breeze, and at full blast our familiar monsoon gales. But here the analogy with man's constructed machine ceases altogether. Ahura's machine very often, too often indeed, gets out of order and control and Ahura, himself, despite his super intelligence and wisdom, cannot, for a time at least, control the beastly machine. It reaches the top-most speed, goes mad and the result is a fearful tornado or hurricane which smashes everything in its path, maims and kills Ahura's creatures. There would be an awful row and an immediate official inquiry if man's constructed machines were to behave in that manner, but in the case of Ahura's it is accepted as inevitable—Act of God—they call it. Why not God's failure? All Ahura's machines are liable to get deranged in the same manner. To mention but a few. We get destructive earth-quakes when the machine that keeps the inter-terrestrial equilibrium gets upset, inundations when the reservoir leaks badly, droughts followed by famine when the pipes are blocked, and so on. Ahura is careless in checking over-population or is powerless to do so and the result is War or devastating epidemic to restore the balance. As far as the struggle for existence in the jungle is concerned we find "Nature red in tooth and claw", and we wonder whether

Ahura could not have planned things differently. Perhaps Dr. Banker, like so many other supernaturalists, will assure us that Ahura is alright, but Ahriman and those other kindred spirits like Ameshaspan, Yazatas and Farvashis play the dickens with the scheme of things as did God Loki in Scandinavian Mythology.

The rest of Dr. Banker's article hardly calls for serious comment. One can see by his meaningless reference to Mr. Mallock's contention "that instead of marvelling that there is order in the stellar movements we should feel it wonderful if it was anything else", that Dr. Banker is not familiar with philosophical controversies and arguments. One is at a loss to understand why he calls this "mere generalisation unsupported by proof." What proofs does he want? Nor is he fortunate when he quotes Professors Edwin Arnold and Fisk in support of the existence of the soul. Prof. Arnold cannot see why, if the laws of the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy are true, intellect, emotion and will should not also be indestructible! Here is one who takes abstractions for realities. He may as well ask why the beautiful colouring of a flower or a butterfly should perish with it. Is it necessary to point to a Professor that what are called the intellect, emotion, sentiment, will, etc. are pure abstractions and have no existence?

Professor Fisk thinks that "the everlasting persistence of the spiritual element in man" (which is not true) "explains the process of evolution without which the whole scheme of the Universe becomes a meaningless riddle." I wonder whether "Prof. Fisk" is the same person as Mr. Fiske who twentyfive years ago wrote a book "Through Nature to God" in which the same argument as

those above quoted are paraded. He was deservedly laughed at and no more was heard of him as a philosopher. Presumably such people are the authorities Dr. Banker relies upon. Well, they and all the ninety per cent scientists who support Dr. Banker died twenty five years ago. Poor Dr. Banker!

When I said that religion has never improved mankind, I was only expressing the views of some very experienced sociologists who have studied the question carefully. Dr. Banker rushes in breathlessly to contradict this. He quotes as an instance the Parsee religion

and the consequences of its neglect by some modern Parsees. Here, Dr. Banker falls from the sublime to the ridiculous. When one speaks of religion as a social problem one thinks in terms of millions and has in mind the great religions of the world. Does Dr. Banker really think that the Parsee religion is a serious problem in the world? Would it make a difference if to-morrow it ceased to exist in Bombay (the only important place in the world where it is still heard)? Really Dr. Banker, I ask you!

C. L. D'AVOINE.

FREEMASONRY.

3. The Craft Degrees.

The craft degrees of Freemasonry are the only degrees entered by the majority of Freemasons. Apart from the ritual, the meaning of these degrees is taught by allegories concerned with the symbols, implements, and theoretical practice of the arts of building. Through these media the candidate is supposed to learn, as Entered Apprentice, of the significance of man's entry into life, and of the nature of himself and the Godhead. As Fellow Craft he is instructed concerning the way of life. As Master Mason he searches for the Lost Secrets, the inner knowledge of the Godhead which man has lost through his imperfections.

Students of this sort of thing will at once begin to see a family resemblance, even in the above bald outline, to the esoteric mumbo-jumbo adopted by all founders of religions and cults. It is novel stuff, however, to the average Apprentice, who has never had any previous

contact with mysticism. He is impressed but rather confused. Various brethren tell him, more or less accurately, the moral principles that a Freemason should observe. The oaths are terrifying, the ritual mildly alarming, and the Apprentice has an uneasy feeling that there is something big behind it. With familiarity, however, he finds that nothing further seems to happen, and like a poor soldier he stumbles through the drill that he has never properly learnt, with one eye on the canteen that will be open when parade is dismissed. The masonic equivalent of the canteen is the "refreshment" that follows "labour." In practice he finds that his craft-brothers are neither more nor less pure, loyal, honest, generous, and wise, than might be expected among an equal number of assorted non-masons. About the only use he can find for his membership is the power to put a brother on his oath in some petty personal affair.

Perhaps it will clear the air if I reveal at once the Great Big Secret of Freemasonry.....the true nature of God, and his Name. No ordinary Freemason ever reaches this secret. It is often promised to him, and he frequently thinks he has got it, but when he "returns" from his "journeys" it always turns out that he has been given "Substitute Secrets," being not yet fit for the Grand Revelation. Such terrible and potent knowledge, he is told, would lead a weak mind to insanity and death. Presumably all the brothers are weak-minded.

This is very old stuff. All savages believe that names are highly important. They never tell anyone their real names, because the knowledge would enable its possessor to work magic against the owner of the name. So savages have a real name known to no one but themselves, then a private name known only to their wives and intimates, then a tribal name for use by blood-brethren, and finally a common name for communication to strangers. God, it appears, has to adopt the same precaution; at least, you find it in the secrets of all religious cults, whether it is the Lower and Higher mysteries of Isis, or Mithras, or among the Dervishes, Brahmins, or Agapemones.

I will not weary the reader by recounting all the increasingly—secret invocations of the Almighty which are awesomely communicated to the Freemason during the years that he progresses through his degrees—he reaches the final Awful Name in the 24th Degree. This name is OM. Of course, a thunderbolt ought to strike me dead as I pen the fatal characters, and possibly the word will burn the paper and the whole printing-press when the compositors set it up.

I am, however, prepared to insure the printers against the risk, on the payment of a small sum. Whoever knows this awful secret is possessed of all knowledge and all power, But in case anybody should try and take advantage of my confidingness, let me warn him there is a catch in it. You only acquire the all-power, etc, *if you know how the word is pronounced.* Unfortunately, no one does know, so right to the end the Freemason is balked of his secret.

This word OM, by the way, is the private name of God in a lot of languages. This heirogram, usually transliterated AUM, is the Ineffable Name of the Brahm inscribed on the golden triangle kept in the Holy of Holies in the sole keeping of the Brahmatma in certain temples of the more philosophical Hindu sects.

The ultimate secret of the Godhead in Freemasonry may also be explained in terms of Hinduism. It might be explained in terms of Ju-ju, or the Roman pantheon, or the rites of Baal, or any other religion with inner mysteries, but Hinduism comes handiest. Briefly, the mason is first introduced to the Great Architect of the Universe, a sort of Brahma. Gradually, by hints and dark references he has unfolded to him the triune nature of the Godhead. The ordinary Freemason reads this trinity as the lopsided Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of Christianity: actually, studying inner meanings, it is really a Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Later comes a double trinity, when the Freemason has communicated to him the Names of God which are female (he usually never discovers that they are female). Finally he approaches a seven-fold Diety. The seventh mysterious figure comprises all the others, and is God himself at last.

This ultimate and innermost central figure is not Brahma the Creator: it is The Brahm, the Centre Within a Centre, the Infinite, the Unknowable, the Point at which all secrets are revealed. The Freemason never gets there. He gets to the centre, but that is only Brahma the Creator. His goal the place where he would become One with the Infinite, the Centre Within the Centre, the All-Comprising, is beyond the Veil—the veil of death. In the ritual of some of the higher degrees the candidate dies and goes beyond the veil, but brings back only substitute secrets: if he got the real ones he would have to stay on the far side of the veil. A very convenient theory which has its place in most mystical creeds.

The Brahmins of India elaborated all this kind of thing more than three thousand years ago. So did the sages of all ancient civilisations. The Freemasons began to piece it together, with many absurd mistakes, two centuries ago. The secrets of the last two paragraphs are the highest secrets of Freemasonry, not the elementary instruction of the first three degrees, which is the main subject of this article. It is convenient, however, to give an outline of the ultimate philosophy of Freemasonry before discussing the craft degrees, to make clear the tendency of the ritual.

We may kill two birds with one stone, by describing the rites of the Craft Degrees in comparison with similar ceremonies in other secret societies. This will not only give an idea of the ritual, but also show that the "secrets" of the Freemasons are enacted by people who have been practising them centuries before Freemasonry was invented. The fact is, that this type of antic originated

among primitive savages, and has been elaborated, borrowed, and intellectualised by magic societies all over the world, the most potent source of dessimation being magical books like the Jewish Cabbala.

The Australian Blackfellows are considered the most primitive of all human beings, yet they perform masonic tricks. When a youth is to be initiated into the adult secrets of the tribe, three circles are marked out on a piece of secluded ground. The circles are joined by paths. Along the borders of the paths are mystical signs and tokens. No women may intrude on pain of death.

In the first circle, the youth is told the secret of his birth. The women of the tribe do not know that copulation has any connection with procreation: it is a secret of the adult males. The candidate is then told that he has to search for the Light, and he sets off along the path to the second circle. Tricks are performed to test his nerve. A terrible noise is heard, which the candidate is told is the voice of God. On the way, the youth rests beside the mystic signs, and the meaning, teaching, and powers of the signs are explained. The youth takes terrible oaths not to reveal these things, particularly to any women. In the second circle, the youth is taught the proper conduct of a man, the ethics of the tribe, particularly that he is never to seduce a brother's wife, or lie to a brother when put upon his secret oath. Absolute obedience to his elders is inculcated. Finally, in the second circle he is told that the terrible noise was only made by bull-roarers, which he must not reveal on pain of death.

Barring the entrance to the third circle is a mound made in the image of a

crucified man. On either side of the figure stand terribly-dressed guardians bearing weapons, who threaten him with death. He escapes only by giving a password. He has to pass along a narrow passage, over the outspread body, and he is told that this is the Gulf of Death, through which he must pass. When he gets safely through the dangers and frights of this Valley of the Shadow, torches are lit, and there is great rejoicing and feasting—at the expense of the new member.

What happened to the native Black-fellow in the Australian bush is practically what happens to the London tradesman in his lodge. The three circles practically correspond to the three craft degrees. A lot of the signs are the same, and so are their meanings.

We get an even closer parallel when we come to more sophisticated ceremonies. When a man becomes a Dervish, he is first initiated into the Bektashi Order, and does practically the same as a first-degree Freemason. He is deprived of all his clothing (masons nowadays omit this rigour), and rigid care is taken that he has nothing upon his person of a metallic character. He enters the lodge blindfold, led by two armed guides, with a running noose about his neck. The Sheik or Master presents a stone knife to his left breast, and binds him to certain virtues. He takes a terrible vow kneeling face-to-face with the Sheik, each holding the other's right hand with a grip that forms the sacred letter Alif (in Freemasonry this is the secret sign of a Mark Master). The Sheik now asks what blessing the candidate desires. The

candidate expresses a desire for Light, and the Sheik orders him to be restored to temporal light. The Sheik seats himself on the throne in the East, and begins an address on the light, which is taken up by the Deputy Sheik, seated in the West. He talks about Enlightening Grace in the heart of Man, the light which Moses saw in the burning bush, and the Light that illuminates every letter of the Koran. The candidate is invested with a white girdle, signifying the purity of new birth. His pain on first seeing the light is paralleled to the pangs of his birth, and he passes between two pillars in the North, out of darkness into light, just as he passed between two human pillars on entering the world, naked and without wealth. And so forth! Finally the Sheik observes that whoever shall know the great secret, His Name, shall be possessed of all knowledge. Later, the candidate has Historical Lectures, giving the history of the Order from its foundation by the Angel Gabriel (Dervishism really originated about 1100 A.D.), and Mystic Charges, in one of which he is told that a man must know himself before he knows Allah.

Translate this into Westernised ritual, and you have the initiation of an Entered Apprentice. The explanation is, of course, that both societies drew their materials from the same common and widespread sources.

EMBUSQUE.

ELEMENTS OF PSYCHOSANALYSIS.

(A Lecture delivered by Dr. A. T. W. Simeons in November last under the auspices of the Rationalist Association of India.)

Psychology is the science which tries to elucidate the workings of the human brain. Formerly, psychology was more or less considered a branch of philosophy but with our increasing knowledge of anatomy and physiology of the nervous system it became gradually involved with medical problems. Certain regions of the brain were found which controlled the working of the muscles, the inner organs and the perception through the senses. Speech equilibrium and the coordination of our movements and many other functions were found to be located in distinct portions of the brain-tissue. The nerve-cells in which the actual working of the brain takes place were discovered and a tangled maze of nerve fibres were followed up and down in years of tedious microscopic analysis, so that it has become possible to follow a nervous impulse from the perception of a stimulus to the resulting action. Let me give you an example. Imagine a fly settling down on your nose. The little cells of touch-perception in the skin of the nose send an urgent cable to the brain that something unusual is happening and immediate relief is required. This message is relayed several times until it reaches the centre of action and a message is dispatched to the muscles of the arm and hand to go to the spot of disturbance. In the mean time the perception has diagnosed the cause of the trouble and the hand is commanded to remove with a swish the unsuspecting insect. We know the cables along which these communications run and where they are relayed. It is not surprising therefore that these discoveries produced an optimistic atmosphere with regard to the problems of psychology

and so we soon find two groups of workers busy, the one amassing a multitude of observations on the minutest details of brain anatomy, hoping thereby to eventually find a material foundation for memory, associations, emotions and reasoning, while the others tried to define and classify these elements of psychology. This group under the direction of that universal genius Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig was known as the School of Experimental Psychology. They timed perceptions, associations, and reflexes, they probed into the capacity of memory and reproduction and devised a stupendous variety of mechanical apparatus with which they earnestly endeavoured to formulate with mathematical precision the subtleties of the human psyche.

Now in the beginning of this century, into the midst of a serenely academic atmosphere into the busy hum of the psychological research laboratories a bomb was thrown. The fuse sizzled for a few years, practically unnoticed and unheeded and then there was a sudden terrific explosion, which set the world aghast and has subsequently altered our outlook on almost every aspect of life, so much so that it has become practically impossible for us to reconstruct the psychological atmosphere of 30 years ago. The man who hurled this bomb was an insignificant-looking lecturer at the University of Vienna, who had busied himself for some time with mental disease and brain-anatomy, who had then gone to Paris and seen the world-famous Prof. Charcot perform experiments with hypnotism, which until then and even at that time was still considered some disreputable form of black-magic. The Viennese

lecturer was at a loose end before he went to Paris and so became tremendously impressed by the experiments of the great Charcot, who, scenting genius, drew the foreigner into his close personal acquaintance. After some months, his head buzzing with new impressions and a feeling of mental pregnancy, Dr. Freud returned to Vienna. He gave a lecture to the Viennese Medical Association about the weird new things he had seen in Paris and was heartily ridiculed for having allowed the Frenchmen to deceive him. Specially, the absurd idea that there is such a thing as a hysterical man was made fun of.

From that day, Freud has been an outcast of this medical faculty in spite of the fact that he has revolutionised our ideas of psychology and the world is ringing with his creative genius. After his rebuff, Freud withdrew from public discussions and started brooding over formula for his still muddled ideas. He is an unemotional seeker of truth, his life is spent in a steady unswerving routine and at the bottom of his heart there is a glowing desire to unravel the mysteries of the mind and thereby benefit suffering humanity. Despondent and gloomy he racked his brains for the key, the password, the formula, for the explanation of the phenomena he had become acquainted with. But as usual light came from an unexpected quarter. At that time there was a wellknown general practitioner Dr. Breuer working in Vienna who had been very successful in the treatment of a hysterical patient.

He found that a girl showing all the alarming symptoms of hysteria improved considerably if she was given an opportunity to speak at length about all her

troubles to an attentive listener. That was so far nothing very new, but after many such one-sided conversations, Breuer had the impression that she was never speaking to the point, but that her associations were revolving round and round something which she would not or could not utter. Then Breuer had an idea. He had heard about hypnotism and suddenly it struck him that under hypnotism it might be possible to get at this hidden "Complex" as it was afterwards called. He immediately started and found to his own surprise that while in a trance the girl told him about an unusual experience in the realms of sex. After awakening the patient, he spoke about this matter with her and found that now she could freely discuss what she had unconsciously avoided mentioning before. From that moment the patient was cured. All the hysterical symptoms disappeared and the girl became a normal member of human society, no longer being a burden to others and a misery to herself. Breuer, the practitioner, saw only a good method for curing hysteria in this result, but the profound, philosophical thinker Freud saw much more when he heard of this remarkable cure and overlooked from an elevated point a vast stretch of terra incognita laid out before him, inviting his exploring and adventurous spirit of discovery. He had found his formula.

This new territory was the region of the unconscious hitherto regarded as something foolish and flabby, altogether unadaptable to reasoning and exact scientific investigation, a broiling mass of muddled emotions not worth bothering about. Because it was inaccessible to analysis, scientific psychology practically ignored its existence. It is Freud's great

deed that he has shown us the paths to the depths of the unconscious, that he has laid out before us the laws which govern this part of our mentality and made clear the outstanding importance of the unconscious for all our actions, sentiments and moods. He has shown us that the unconscious is not some irrational and transcendental sphere of the mind but rather the intelligible root of our personality. Let me give you a metaphor to make this clear. Let us imagine ourselves in a well furnished but pitch-dark room, carrying a torchlight which gives a weak and narrow beam of light. This little flashlight is our conscience, only lighting up very small portions of our unconscious, which is the room all round us. Pre-Freudian psychology restricted itself to this small spot of light and measured and studied only the parts of furniture which it revealed and pretended not to notice anything when the shins were bruized and grazed by odd corners of an invisible environment. They would not admit that they were locked up in the room of the unconscious, groping their way in the dark and stumbling over chairs and tables. In this room Freud found the switch to a mighty candelabra which he called psychoanalysis. In the brilliant illumination of this light he could take a patient's hand and lead him away from a cupboard through which he might be struggling to get away mistaking it for a door.

Now what do we know of these laws of the unconscious? The unconscious knows nothing of morality or ethics; it is ruled only by the natural instincts of our animal nature, inborn and inherited from our remotest ancestors. All unruly passions and desires be they good or bad have a free hand in this part of our being. All conventions and maxims of

human society are strictly confined to the wake conscience and therefore a continual warfare is waging at the point where conscious actions, sentiments and thoughts are emerging out of the stormy ocean of the unconscious. They all have to pass a very strict censorship before they are allowed into the lime-light and the Board of Censors is composed of wise old gentlemen such as decency, morality, social amiability, chastity, respectability and the love of our neighbour. The power of these Censors is astounding and only the very keenest observer will occasionally notice a minute detail slip through *undetected*. All goes well as long as these gentlemen remain the wise, mild, kindhearted officials they are meant to be and face the horrors of instinct with a benevolent and knowing smile. Then the distribution of power remains well-balanced and harmonious, but if they become hard, harsh and unreasonable the waves of the ocean become higher and higher till a tidal wave sweeps into their midst with terrific force and upsets the worthy council. This catastrophe is the explanation for the outbreak of what we call neurosis or hysteria.

But the power of the Censors is so great that even if they cannot cope with the dynamic force of the onslaught they nearly always succeed in altering its course. This flood from the unconscious never storms straight on but surges through winding valleys and bye-lanes of the mind until it breaks upon some fertile plain and causes havoc at a spot where submersion is least expected. The bewilderment of the patient is so great that he finds it impossible to trace the flood back to its source and stands perplexed at the sudden appearance of so much water. It is typical of a neurosis that its outward symptoms never have a direct

connection to the real root of the evil, atleast not a conscious connection, and it is the object of psychoanalysis to trace the outburst back to the far depth of the unconscious, where it originally came from and thereby settle the grievance which gave rise to the uncanny symptoms of the neurotic patient. Now let us dive down into the depth of the unconscious and explore the dark regions where these tidal-waves are born. Deep down at the bottom of the unconscious we shall come upon two mighty power stations which supply the brute force for our emotions, thoughts and actions. The one has to preserve life and bodily existence of the individual by creating a craving for air, food and drink, while the other serves the maintenance of the race through the impetus of sex. As long as energy can evaporate unrestrictedly into consciousness there will be no trouble, that is to say, if the desires and passions of that immoral and unethical subconscience can find sufficient gratification in conscious life there will be no stagnation of energy in the unconsciousness but if on the other hand the censorship is drawn closer stagnation will occur and the energy will go on accumulating until it exceeds the capacity of the storage and then it will force its way to the surface.

Now, in what form does the pressure bottled up in the unconscious, present itself to the Censors guarding the entrance to the conscious world. Every human being has buried in the depth of his emotional life certain passions and desires which, although natural to all living creatures, have been banished from every-day life as incestuous, abnormal or impious. If the censors are so strong that, besides forbidding the realisation of such desires, they will not even allow

them to become conscious in the form of thoughts, they will grow and grow stronger and eventually turn into what is known as a "Complex".

Thousands of analysis have proved over and over again that it is a perplexing law of the unconscious that every normal boy is strongly attached to his mother and unconsciously sees a rival in his father. In its coarsest form it is the terrible sin of incest and a horrifying idea to the conscience of the intellectual sentimentalist. But there it is. Time and again apparently hopeless cases of neurosis have been completely cured by dragging this so-called Oedipus complex into the broad daylight of the patient's conscience. Naturally, as a rule, all this remains hidden and harmless in the unconscious if the mother allows the son to show his affection through the little intimacies of the parent-child relation and the father transforms his authority to a friendly companionship avoiding obvious demonstrations of love for the mother in the presence of the child.

That shows that complexes do not necessarily lead to the outbreak of a neurosis. Almost everybody suffers from certain inexplicable aversions or impediments, such as the fear of a mouse or a spider for instance. Then there are sensations of nausea, uneasiness and fear associated with certain actions such as walking over an empty space, being alone in a dark room or eating certain foods. All these symptoms cannot be sufficiently explained by reasoning. Their origin lies in the unconscious and their psychological mechanism is the same as in a neurosis, into which these almost normal phenomena can develop if they become aggravated.

Another shocking aspect of Freudian Psychology is the teaching that the sexual generator in the unconscious does not start working at the age of puberty, but is fully active and alive in the infant. The general line of personality is definitely laid out by the fourth year of age. All achievements of later life are merely the elaboration of this first rough sketch and in psychoanalysis we often find the key to neurotic disturbances in the earliest, to him quite unimportant, recollections and memories of the patient. It is then long before abstract reasoning begins that the Censors are chosen and now let us try and understand in what way the choice of this guardian angel or cruel dragon, as the case may be, can be influenced. These influences come from the psychological environment of the first years of life and it is then that the soft and pliable mentality is moulded and shaped and the personality of the grown-up individual is only an exaggerated reproduction of this first rough cast. It is a fatal error to believe, as many parents do, that their baby is "So small" and "Doesn't understand". It is incredible how even a one-year-old infant responds to its environment. You have surely all noticed how strongly a small child will show sympathies and antipathies for certain people which very often seem quite unreasonable to us. They have very keen instincts, like a wild animal.

There is nothing a child resents more than being neglected by its parents, and a very complicated situation arises for the first-born child at the arrival of a second baby which usually draws the attention of the family away from him, the former centre, to the newcomer and it is extremely difficult for the small child to get over this disappointment. Wise

parents will let him participate in the excitement of the event by talking about it before hand and give the child the impression that it is going to co-operate under the new conditions; then the child will feel that the newcomer is a little secret between him and his parents and it will look forward eagerly to its new companion and understand that it is helping its mother by being good and giving as little trouble as possible. But the child must feel that it is *co-operating* and not being commanded by some, to its mind unreasonable authority. That is the great lesson that Freud has taught us : Treat your children with the greatest respect and always act as if you were in the presence of a grown-up. Never quarrel in the presence of your baby however young; it will feel it before it can speak. Children only thrive mentally in a loving, harmonious and peaceful atmosphere. Always remember baby is a much better psychologist than you and I, and we must always bear in mind that in the small child a marvel of intricate mechanism is forming and into the subtle pattern of a glorious tapestry every impression is woven. No faults can be completely eradicated; every stain remains; we cannot be too careful when tending the first growth of a human character.

But there is yet another lesson we have learnt. I mean that it is an unpardonable crime to punish a small child. A little child does not reason. Its actions are only prompted by instinct; it is absolutely and always innocent, does not understand the meaning of punishment and its reaction is only fear and dread. Now nothing plays greater havoc with a growing psyche than fear. It is the very worst of all educational methods and the best medium to cultivate neurosis.

Although a child cannot reason for itself it will accept reasoning in terms of its own sphere of life. The strongest argument for a child lies in the love for its mother. If, for instance, the usual Good-night kiss is withheld because the mother says she is ashamed of her boy doing such and such a thing and lets the child feel that she is suffering, the child will be tremendously impressed and then a little conversation at the bedside will make up the trouble. The kiss will seal up a stronger friendship and the child will have benefitted in every way. It has regained the affection of its beloved one and goes to sleep with a smile on its lips. That is education, whereas the unexpected slap from a woman who has lost her temper is like a bomb dropped from an aeroplane on a sleeping city—hideous and destructive. Every bodily or cruel punishment, such as locking up in a room or withholding food is really deserved by the parent who inflicts it on his children. 99 out of 100 difficult children are only so because they have been brought up wrongly from the very beginning.

I hope you will excuse this little transgression into the nursery, but childhood is of fundamental importance in psychoanalysis.

And now let me give you in brief outlines a general idea of the technic of psychoanalysis. You remember that it was with hypnotism that the first results were achieved, and this was in the early days the usual procedure. After a few conversations the patient was put to sleep and questioned further and soon laid bare his secrets, if he was lucky enough to be in the hands of a skilled questioner and a true psychologist, well acquainted with the technic of hypnotism. This rather crude method was used until Freud made the remarkable discovery that there existed a normal state of mind

which psychologically speaking was very similar to the hypnotic trance. He found that by the analysis and interpretation of dreams almost the same results could be obtained with a little more trouble. Almost all neurotic patients have very vivid dreams which they easily remember and produce for analysis. This was a tremendous improvement, which we can compare to the advance brought about by X-Rays. Formerly the subconscious had to be opened up for inspection by the not quite harmless *operation* of hypnotism, now it has become possible to have a look right inside from the outside so to speak. Ofcourse; just as in X-Ray photography, you must learn to interpret the picture. Very experienced workers who have got the knack of gaining the patient's completest confidence and totally eliminating their own personality can do even without the dreams in simple cases, but if there is a strong obstruction the study of dreams will nearly always bring the solution and today it is only in the rarest cases that hypnotism has to be used as a last resort. The patient usually accepts the revelation of his complex with an intense feeling of relief if the proceedings have been carried out with greatest care and discretion and in most cases has an instantaneous feeling that he is relieved from some terrific oppression. That is a sure sign of success.

And now there is just one thing I would still wish to point out. No one can analyse himself because that would be as you will now understand a contradiction. So if I have succeeded in rousing your interest in this fascinating subject, do not study it with a view to finding a solution to your own problems but approach it with a clear scientific desire to catch a glimpse of the profound mysteries of human nature and you will be struck by the terrifying magnitude of our ignorance.

CAUSALITY AND THE NEW PHYSICS.

Those acquainted with the recent utterances of physicists will have been aware of the new developments that are taking place in the physics of atomic phenomena due to the quantum theory, the wave mechanics and the conception of the particle or rather the "wavicle" of light. Some notable physicists all over the world including Eddington, Planck, Bohr, Heisenberg, Darwin and others have however tried to draw philosophical conclusions from these new discoveries and have doubted the applicability of the law of causality to the events in this world. A number of scientists all over the world have followed this up by discarding the law of causality in its entirety and have declared that the freedom of the will has been established as a proved fact. Even India has not remained free from these new thoughts as is shown by an article by G. S. Mahajani in the September issue of the Bombay University Journal.

To readers of ["Reason"] many of the mathematical calculations involved in modern atomic physics will be unintelligible and it is not the intention of the present writer to go into them. What is attempted here is to take the results of the new ideas and to see whether they are beyond the law of causality. A cause as defined by Hume is such that if an event B always follows an event A and can never take place without A having occurred previously (while A can take place without the previous occurrence of B) then A is called the cause of B. A primitive example for this is that lightning is the cause of thunder. Now, the law of causality says that there is always one or more causes to an event and that

the event in its turn must become the cause of other events. This law has been the guiding principle of the Science of the last 200 years and more.

A direct consequence of the law of causality is the principle of determinism. One can express the same by saying that as the present state of things is the direct result of the state of things in the past (*i.e.* the sum of the causes) the future state of things, being a direct result of the present state, is predetermined. Expressed in scientific language, one can say that if the condition c' of a closed system at a time t is known, the condition c' of the same system at a future time t' is also predetermined. This principle of determinism has been sometimes called a fatalistic principle; as applied to human beings, it is equivalent to saying that what an individual will do in a given set of conditions is a consequence of his training, heredity, physical condition etc. and is predetermined. Human capacity or otherwise to foretell the actual way in which a particular individual will behave in a certain set of circumstances changes nothing in the objective applicability of this law of causality.

Now this law of causality was and is distasteful to a large number of people for various different reasons and attempts are constantly being made either to show that the law is not universally true or that it is at least not applicable to those cases in which human beings are concerned. Religious people did not naturally like this law as it was against their conception of a god who could do what he liked without regard to past events.

Moreover, as it demanded a cause even to the existence of the god himself, the theist had either to postulate the existence of an infinite series of gods, one being the cause of the other or to give up the idea of god altogether. All organised and unorganised religions have therefore tried in vain to oppose the law of causality.

Among the haters of the law of causality were also those semi-religious people who were obsessed by the idea of the "freedom of the will", at least in the case of the higher animals. Their idea was, that as man feels himself free to choose between various possible courses of action, he has the freedom of will to *do either this or that* or the other and each man is therefore responsible for his good or bad actions. This attitude seems to be quite reasonable at first sight. But one must consider, that although we feel ourselves free to choose between one course of action and another, still even our choice is determined by our heredity and surroundings. That nobody perhaps can say what that choice is going to be, does not change the fact of that choice being by itself predetermined. Similarly, the law of causality rules out all miracles, as these are supposed to be events that happen without any cause or in spite of causes that would lead us to expect a different event. All advocates of life after death, spirits etc. have therefore opposed the law of causality.

Determinism, in the sense of prediction of future events, does not hold good in all cases where an accurate observation of the phenomena and the consequent foretelling of subsequent events is, in the very nature of things, impossible. Thus, although it is true that if we know

completely the present condition of an organism, say man, we can foretell what it will do in the next moment, it is not possible to draw a practical conclusion from this statement, because the very act of *completely* studying the present condition of that organism would bring about its death. Thus because of our incapacity or through some other cause, it is not possible to obtain the necessary information regarding the causes of a particular event and that event must therefore be considered to come as a surprise to us.

This may, in particular cases, be changed in future either by an improvement in the methods of observation or by a further improvement in the human powers of perception. Thus, even in comparison to a couple of decades back, we possess greater information regarding hereditary influences and it is not necessary to kill an organism in order to get a knowledge about its considerable condition.

There are however a certain class of phenomena in physics, where no improvement in the methods of observation seems likely to give us any information of this kind and it is these phenomena which have been investigated and discussed in the last few years and which apparently throw some doubts on the applicability of the law of causality and on the doctrine of determinism which is a corollary of the same. These phenomena are the changes in the position and velocity of atoms, molecules and such other microscopic particles both of matter and of energy. Without entering into the details of the mathematical calculations involved, I may say, that these particles are so small and the amounts of energies involved in their movements

are so minute that any experiment that we may make in order to observe their position and velocity is bound to affect these latter. Thus, the very process of observing an atom means changing either its velocity or its position, and we are therefore unable to draw any conclusions regarding the future velocities and positions of the atom in case we had not observed it. Moreover the new Physics has also shown that it is in the nature of things impossible that we could ever be able to make accurate observations about atomic phenomena as observation in this case would not mean becoming aware of a situation which would be there in any case, but would involve a change in it for the very purpose of observation.

Now, this our inability to observe certain atomic phenomena and the consequent impossibility of foretelling other phenomena caused by the former, has been taken to mean that the doctrine of determinism has been thrown overboard and that therefore also the law of causality. This is however, in my opinion, the result of faulty reasoning. In the first place, one must remember that the principle of determinism (crudely expressed by saying that today is the result of yesterday and that tomorrow will be the result of today) is absolutely independent of human ability or otherwise of knowing all the causes that lead to a particular event and of foretelling with the help of that knowledge the happening of that event. When, a thousand years ago, nobody had either the means of observing the positions and paths of the heavenly bodies or the necessary knowledge of mathematics to foretell eclipses or the like, these events were still causally brought about by the velocities and positions of the planets, just as they are now. In this

case therefore, an increase in man's knowledge and skill has brought out the fact that the law of causality applies to astronomical phenomena. In the case of atomic phenomena however, scientists are practically unanimous that there is a limit to the possibility of objective observation and that we can never expect to get an accurate knowledge of the velocity and position of individual particles. It must still be assumed however that the velocity and position of an individual particle are the direct result of its velocity and position in the past. And one can also say, that if there would have been a *conscious being capable of knowing these constants at a particular time t without influencing them in the least, it could have foretold the value of these constants at a future time t'* . Thus the law of causality and its consequence the principle of determinism are applicable to all phenomena irrespective of the presence of a subject in the vicinity. They are so to say objective laws.

Moreover, even Eddington and his fellow doubters say that the law of causality does apply for all practical purposes to all phenomena where a large number of atoms are concerned, *i.e.* to macroscopic phenomena. This is explained by them with the help of the law of probability and they say that if an event is repeated an infinite number of times, it may be that the same result will be produced in all cases except perhaps one or two, but that as this is only as imaginary case, it need not be considered and the law of causality will then apply as a statistical law. Some scientists and pseudo-scientists have however gone very much ahead and drawn conclusions regarding the freedom of the will. (compare *e.g.* Jordan, *Naturwissenschaften*, 20, 815). They divide all physiological

phenomena into two kinds or zones. The first zone consists of those phenomena which are macroscopic and are governed by the law of causality. The second zone however consists of those reactions which take place with reference to very minute quantities of matter and which are the very reactions which bring about the reactions of the first zone. These reactions between quantities of matter which may be as small as an atom, being such as make it impossible for man to study them in detail without bringing into them a new disturbing factor, are supposed to be non-causal. The way in which an individual will react in a particular set of circumstances is therefore, according to these scientists, not predetermined. In other words, we have here the freedom of two wills.

Here also the reasoning is extremely faulty. The only conclusion that one will be justified in drawing from our inability to undertake accurate observation regarding microscopic physiological phenomena will be, that we will not be able to foretell the course of events. That does not by a long way mean that the phenomena are not predetetermined

or that they are non-causal. Suppose an ovum being fertilised by one of a large number of spermatozoon. One can scarcely imagine that the velocity, resisting power and other properties of the individual sperm will not determine the one which will eventually fertilise the ovum, but that it will be a matter of chance or accident. That we may not be able to say which particular sperm will be the one to fertilise the ovum has absolutely nothing to do with the matter. The "chance" or the "accident" is therefore only in relation to us. Objectively considered, the future event must necessarily be the consequence of past events.

The law of causality and the principle of determinism have thus not suffered the slightest set back owing to recent discoveries. They have only demonstrated the fact that we can probably never hope to be able to predict events in atomic physics, although they must be, objectively considered, obeying the law of causality exactly as in macroscopic phenomena.

DINAKAR KARVE.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS.

Nature takes short steps in the march of progress from the known to the next unknown. These who depend for their optimism upon catastrophic changes and lightning revelation are oftener disappointed than they who keep steady the sails of their imagination and plod their weary way slowly along. The field of investigation may appear vast and uncertain as the sea, and waves of doubt and even despair may seem threatening, but the rudder of discrimination, modest calculation and safe assumption will not fail to tide over the most intricate of the human problems. Faith in the miraculous, in the fiat of supernatural intervention, in a mode of sudden deliverance from the trammels of the all-too-complicate system of existence that life has developed so far, may be easier, more comfortable, and happier to cling to, but in its ultimate failure to resolve our problems lies a pathetic futility more depressing than the labour and the pain involved in a just appraisalment of the present situation with a view to formulate plans however modest for the immediate future. The mightiest ambition has to remain contented with the immediate future, just as much as it is concerned with the passing NOW, because remoter futurity shapes itself on conditions over which men today have but slight control. He who presumes to dictate to humanity for all time either deludes himself or seeks to deceive others. The problem at any point of time is never identical with that at any other. While nature never jumps, each successive link in the chain forged by its process is fashioned upon but differs with its past. It is in the symmetry of

its operation that rests that stability of the structure and the confidence of our appreciation of its method. It never disappoints a just calculation and sober hypothesis.

It may plausibly be urged that while nature's constructive processes are uniform, and amenable to precise calculation, because they are steady, slow and sure, its destructive forces are catastrophic, sudden, and beyond all possibility of human appreciation. While nature does not jump while building up, it might jerk and tilt in its downward course of breaking down. But this argument assumes the existence of a differential calculus in natural processes, as much as to say that the mighty forces that move the universe obey the coloured signals 'up' and 'down.' Construction or otherwise is a fiction in the human brain, just as East and West is a distinction that arises from temporal causes like the relative position of two bodies in space whose absolute dimension is devoid of all cardinal values. In fact, nature, absolute nature, unrelated to man has no distinctive mode of evaluating its products either as tending toward destruction or the more beneficent process of construction. These are values that are superimposed upon nature by human reflexion, and will disappear the moment the mirror of the human mind is withdrawn from them. Nature builds as freely as it demolishes, grows as abundantly as it dries up the fountains of its life, and takes equal pains, spends the same labour, and derives similar pleasure in all its work conceived by man either as on the positive side of warm building-up or on the negative side of cold

destruction. To nature there is no value beside its own. We, that are its products, bring to bear upon its travail values invented by us. We apply our standards and put prices upon natural forces and classify them as constructive, destructive, useful, more useful, beneficent or malignant, healthy or injurious, poor rich and richer, creative and sustaining. How silently, how indifferently, do the events transpire despite human price and blame, one seldom pauses to reflect. While sleeping or awake the universe rolls onward in its prodigious march of which one has scant recognition. The huge distances of space traversed by all the mighty globes, and the total output of new evolved life in any moment of our existence leave no impression on us or disturb the even course of an ignorant plodding, but withal, such mighty transformations cannot be without effect. Perhaps, it is a connection too remote to merit serious attention, or it is not.

One apparent distinction between the constructive and the opposite processes in nature seems to lie in their varying intensity and extent. While the forces of birth are relatively milder, and less diffused, the ravages of the brutal elements are more volcanic in their ferocity as well as their field of operation. The benignant crops slowly rise from underground while the devastating flood turns up in an instant to sweep away all hope. While cities are long in building, a sudden eruption of fire, or an avalanche of ice shatters down ages of civilisation in a few minutes. The syncline and the anticline in geological strata or an over-driven fold would have robbed poor earth of myriads of her belongings whose bare fossils reveal but dimly their stupendous tale.

But it is a mistake to suppose that natural forces are stronger all one way, that the vitalising one is feebler than devitalisation. The evidence is on the other hand not favourable to the one more than to the other. Our census reports that show increased birthrate are an instance. The science of zoology that derives diverse species and successively differentiated characteristics from a few simpler organisms is another. The evidence of paleontology does not conflict with the theory of the evolution of complex mechanisms from the primitive and comparatively simpler forms of life. If the break-down was immense, still, there is no warrant for the inference that the building-up was not at least equal to the task.

Nature revels in mass-production. It cares more for the kind than for the individual. In all the numberless forms of plant and animal life, not one may be named which has only a single, solitary instance of a species. Take any plant, mention any animal, one need not halt before discovering innumerable plants and countless animals of the denomination. Nature, upto now, never produced anything except in bulk, and it never showed single samples. It dumps, as best it may, the skies with stars and galaxies, and the earth with hordes of minerals, plants and animals. Indeed, not any among them are counted otherwise than by the million.

Even at the stage of plant-life the rudiments of the herd-instinct become apparent. Forests disclose an affinity of the kind and quality of trees growing in particular localities. A healthy admixture of divergent species may be found together, but mostly on the principle of give and take. And when the

native soil gets exhausted, the seeds carried by wind and bird explore fresh regions of occupation. It is not without significance that the oak, cedar, and teak, abound in forests of vast magnitude, and the coconut and the plantain and the mango are reared collectively in extensive groves. It is the index of life that reveals itself in swarms of bees and ants and flights of fowl, and herds of cattle. To observe the social behaviour in the lower order of creation is to gain an insight into natural impulses inherent in man. The problem is so fascinating that precious lives have been spent in observing the tendencies among such tiny beings as the ants, their families and government, their wars and administration. Who that has had an opportunity of witnessing the prerogative of the queen-bee can ignore the principle that political organisation is meant for the public good, that the individual is to be subordinated in some degree to collective life? Whence flow those noises at dawn that disturb the placid slumbers of rest, to advise the adjacent birds to take to their wing in search of food, and whither bound are they that spread their toilsome wings on an evening sky? Count them if you will but why such congregationalism?

Much evidence is adduced to suggest that collectivism precedes the emergence of consciousness. It remains to consider the influence that the latter exerts on the former. The helplessness of tender age, and the affection of the parent toward its offspring begin to tie the chord that draws them together into a family. Group or tribal consciousness is inevitable in jungle life surrounded with fear, and the need to meet a common danger. Far more than love it is the dread of a common enemy that knits tribal life into a homogeneous whole

wherein the individual is even sacrificed for the safety of the community. It is not always concrete physical danger as some fancied supernatural agency that calls forth the altruistic tendencies of the primitive mind. Some god of pestilence, famine or draught often evokes a tribal feast or fast or other ceremony and sacrifice. Experience is pooled, and individual discretion is subordinated to the well-being of the clan. Congregational prayer induces a state of self-forgetfulness, and an ecstasy of collectivism overtakes self-realisation. Individual thought is kept low while mass feeling is permitted to rule supreme.

Among the civilised nations the circumference of collectivism is seen to expand. Communities overflow into nationhood. But the common interests of the nation are yet imbedded upon fear and distrust of other nations. Fear of the neighbour, and an effort to outdo his achievements in war and peace, it is these that are given the survival-value rather than that humanitarian passion for fellow-feeling that is the pronounced goal of human advance. True, an occasional prophet sows the seed, but nationhood is yet far from expanding into its highest potentiality. Competition, which is another name for the struggle to monopolise the survival-value of the race, is seen in armaments, exclusive markets, tariffs, embargoes, in the maladjustments between capital and labour, and in all forms of racial and economic discrimination. History is witness to the limitations of the process of collectivism.

These limitations have resulted in the subsidence of empires, just as the collective tendencies within the nation have brought up their emergence. Ancient Rome, and modern Germany, to name

but two, are instances. On the one hand the exaltation of individualistic propensities and accumulation of wealth among capitalistic nations tends to exclusiveness, bigotry, and contempt which must eventually lead to disruption. While on the other, the total eclipse of the individual in the nation-state as in Sparta or modern Russia carries with it the cold discontent and the lack of initiative uncongenial for harmony and peace. For temporary periods men may work themselves into frenzies or warlike activities even for peacetime production but there is something inherently adverse to the human element in the year-plans of the United Soviet Socialist Republics. In the ambition of mass-production, the individual, virtually annihilated, craves for restoration. If collective consciousness were to mean the total absence of individual consciousness, that is a sign that the pendulum has swung too far.

It is not as if all organisation is a hindrance to the realisation of the highest and best in individual man and in human

society. A structure that respects the laws of its component elements would be more stable than one that runs counter to their grain. It is not by withdrawing all organisation whatsoever from the earth's face that one may take stock of the conglomerate of human well-being, nor may it be by organising on a group or national basis. The pride of post-war politics, the League-consciousness, is slowly getting rid of national boundaries, but its primary prospective is European peace. Other continents enter into its vision only indirectly, and mostly do not enter at all, being the domestic concerns of one or other of the European powers. But just as individual states enlarge the ambit of their jurisdiction and enter new departments of human life, sanitation, child-welfare and the rest, the road is yet far distant when the League-consciousness of today translates itself into the directive force for the well-being of entire humanity, the collective-consciousness of man.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

THE BLOODY REMINDER—November 11th.

It is just a little over a month that we have had all the skinny women, fat old men and pompous looking priests messing about organizing this fete, bossing over that charity show, and thereby succeeding in making a general nuisance of themselves. And pray what is all this for? "Originally an expression of genuine sorrow and horror at the carnage of the war, it was an impressive manifestation of general sorrow. Those who had lost, and those who had not lost some loved one in the war were in the mood to take part in a general expression of grief. But it has long ceased to be useful for the purpose of generating genuine horror of war, or save in a minority of cases, more than a formal expression of grief. People cannot be sorrowful by either royal or parliamentary decree, and Armistice Day is now little more of an expression of natural grief than would be a two-minute silence for the death of a Queen. Grief to be impressive must be spontaneous. To have it sent out by the B. B. C., or through the newspapers, that it has been ordered that on November 11, the whole nation shall express its sorrow for the late war for two minutes, is to make real grief ridiculous. The private room, not the public highway is the place for genuine sorrow. To see a number of people, on their own accord, remaining silent on some anniversary that is to them sacred or sorrowful is one thing. It is as impressive to intelligent folk as would be a Mohammedan suddenly placing his prayer mat in Charring Cross and going through his devotions during the such hour. But to see everybody expressing grief to order with an occasional case of a man being assaulted

by the crowd because he will not obey the order to be sorry, is to reduce the two minutes' silence to almost the level of an incident during the progress of an election. It is time the communal performance was abandoned and everyone left free to indulge in a natural and healthy sorrow, if they felt like it after such a lapse of time.

But whatever may have been the original idea of the two minutes silence, and the Cenotaph ceremonies, it is certain that to-day they are serving the very opposite purpose for which the mass of the people originally believed they were intended. What happens round the Cenotaph on November 11 is nothing but substantially a glorification and a hallowing of war. There is present the army, the navy, the air force, and the Church. Force and cunning will receive its annual advertisement and its annual glorification. A contingent of men representing art, commerce, science and literature will not be present. Naturally, for so far as war is concerned, art is useful only to display the attractiveness of war, literature to extol it, science to invent instruments for waging it, and commerce to provide means for carrying it on. Their place is with the crowd in the pit, not with the performers on the stage. The stage must be reserved for those who can be trusted to act as 'creators of bloodlust'—to use General Crozier's expressive phrase.

The ceremony round the Cenotaph is a replica of hundreds of ceremonies and sermons throughout the country. With unconscious sarcasm "O God our help in ages past" will be sung, the noble self-sacrifice of the men who died will be

extolled, soldiers will be there with their spick and span uniforms, their wearers well-fed and well-clothed, military bands will add their contribution to the emotional excitements of the occasion and beyond will be a new generation, the potential fighters of the next war, feeling what an important person to civilization the soldier is, what noble men a military life breeds, and how essential the soldier is to a genuine civilization. Why, there could not be a better recruiting agency than this annual parade, this ceremony of a two minutes silence, when everything is hushed so that the nation may collectively do what it can to keep alive the spirit of militarism!

For this is what it has really become. We have a nation-wide ceremony, the effect of which is to impress upon a new generation the value of militarism to the people. Some few days ago a deputation of leading persons waited upon the Prime Minister to impress upon him the importance of peace. The deputation really said nothing and the Prime Minister emptied his mind to them—that is, he said nothing. But suppose the deputation instead of talking futilities about the necessity of peace and the evils of war—at which game Mr. Macdonald is, easily their master, had issued an ultimatum. Suppose they had said that for the future none of their organizations would take any part in military organizations, that if war came, not a sermon would be preached encouraging men to go to war, not a word would be said about the "moral uplift" of war, not a text would be cited from the Bible in favour of war, that the clergy would continue to preach during war as during peace that war was a degradation, that it demoralized all, victor and vanquished, that in modern war, death during war meant death amid filth, amid such scenes of brutality and horror that men could only remain sane by cultivating the habit of laughing at them. Supposing they added that during the Armistice commemoration they would all take care

to preach that kind of sermon, and keep their word, then there would indeed be let loose a tremendous agency against war and against militarism.

At present we are making for war, with greater horrors than the last war. Our leaders tell us that we are nearer war than we have been since 1914. And if it comes, and when it comes, we shall have the usual childish recriminations as to who began the war, or which nation wanted war. We could end war if we would. But we cannot hope to do so with our public processions which *glorify* war, with our public shows of naval parades and military manoeuvres and their subsequent *boasting* of the strength of our navy, and the efficiency of our army and air force, with our training of schoolboys in military drill, with cadet corps and military tattoos, to which thousands of school children are taken. *Wars are made in times of peace* and the nations are to-day so acting as to make the next war "inevitable". They are concerned chiefly that it shall not be too dear and not too dangerous."

By glorifying the 11th of November what we are really doing is glorifying the inhuman slaughter of the innocent in the Great War, glorifying the murder of some mother's son, egged on by the hysterics of priests who should know better and by other people with vested interests.

Would it not be ever so much more sensible if all the enthusiasm that Nov. 11 collects was spent on Anti-War demonstrations instead? If only all those who proudly paid for their poppies would subscribe half as much and collect a fund for ANTIWAR propaganda!

Of course to those superior beings, the Army officer and his arch instigator the Army Chaplain—vide Gen. Croziers book—all this Anti-War talk is "sheer rubbish" but whether the public who has once been bitten is twice shy or not, remains to be seen.

Celebrating November 11th is the same as first contracting a hedious disease and then shouting for joy when cured!"

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(in The Freethinker)

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE PRIMATES.

The pronounced likeness of men to monkeys early impressed savage humanity. The folk-lore of almost all primitive peoples who inhabited countries where apes or monkeys abound is replete with tales of their kinship, and sometimes of their identity with mankind. Nor is this recognition restricted to the lowlier races, as the most cultured communities seem instinctively attracted to their Simian relatives. The crowds that assemble where apes and monkeys are exhibited in menageries and Zoological Gardens, or linger near naturalists' establishments where monkeys may be seen, testify to the intense curiosity awakened by creatures so suggestive of ourselves.

Moreover, the external resemblances of *Homo sapiens* to his hairy cousins; the so human-like-movements of the hands and expression of eyes; the placid demeanour in moments of contentment; the fierce and angry attitude in times of annoyance; all bring home to us a slightly uncanny consciousness of man's kinship with the beasts that perish.

These outward appearances, powerfully suggestive as they are, become even more marked when the anatomical structure of the monkey group is examined. No wonder, then, that when pioneer naturalists attempted to frame a scientific classification of animals they were constrained to include man and monkey in one natural order—the *Primates*.

In addition to apes and men, this order includes those more primitive creatures the *Prosimia*, more popularly known as Lemurs. Related to the lemurs

and lower monkeys there is a sub-group classified as *Tarsioidea*.

These interesting animals are now represented by a single genus. They still survive in the form of a queer little creature termed the spectral Tarsier, whose range seems now restricted to the Oriental areas of Borneo, the Philippines, Billiton and Banca.

A veritable relic of the past, and peculiar to a confined habitat, the Tarsoids formerly possessed a far-flung territory. Ages ago, in Eocene Times, as their fossilized remains prove, these organisms inhabited lands as far apart as Northern America and Southern France. That they are to be enumerated among the ancestral stock from which men and monkeys have both arisen is practically certain. The New World forms are most ancient, and the strata that yield their petrified remains also contain fossils of even more primitive members of the same stock. Again still earlier representatives of the Lemuroid group—the Tree Shrews—have been preserved in the same deposits. But whether man's most remote ancestors arose in America or in Asia remains an open question.

What are regarded as the most primitive forms of extinct monkeys were discovered in Egyptian deposits in 1911. The ancestral home of these animals is at present unknown. As the most primitive living monkeys are restricted to South America, Prof. Elliot Smith provisionally considers the Western Continent as the birthplace of men's dimly remote ancestry. And he surmises that: "When the Lemuroids and Tarsoids crossed the Atlantic bridge to reach the Old World, they must have been

accompanied (or soon followed) by very primitive monkeys, whose modified descendants are the Oligocene fossils found in Egypt. Some of the earlier original stock remained in America, and found a permanent asylum in South America, where they still survive as the Platyrrhine monkeys" (*Human History*, P. 63.)

The land bridge which, millions of years since, connected America with Africa has long been submerged. Still, once they had reached Africa the wandering lemurs and tarsoids ultimately evolved into the extremely primitive monkeys discovered in Egyptian rocks. These nimble animals apparently wandered in various directions for their remains have come to light both in Europe and Asia.

There appears little doubt that these early *Primates* first spread in an easterly direction. In any case, they flourished in India during the Miocene Period, for the Siwalik Hills in the Himalaya foothills have yielded the fossils of various man-like apes. In truth, wherever the climate permitted the growth of forests, monkeys and lemurs abounded, while in less genial conditions these animals languished.

At the close of the Eocene Period or in the opening stages of the succeeding Oligocene Period primitive anthropoids had made their appearance. Countless centuries later, in Miocene Times, many large anthropoid apes dwelt in India, and from this centre had migrated in all directions both East and West. Their remains may be found on the Atlantic sea board in Africa and Europe alike, while to those far eastern areas in which their ancestors settled in remote Miocene Times the gibbon and orang-outang are now confined. In India itself they have

long since been extinct. It was in the Miocene that an extinct gibbon (*Eliopithecus*) existed in Europe in company with a large defunct species of ape known as *Dryopithecus*. This ape was the size of a chimpanzee, and it is of great interest to the evolutionist as its fossil remains indicate a closer affinity to man than any of the surviving manlike apes.

It appears probable that at the period when the apes invaded Europe their kindred roamed from Arabia into Africa, where their modified descendants, the chimpanzee and gorilla, now reside. The extinct ape's skull discovered at Taungs in Bechuanaland, which Prof. Raymond Dart has named *Australopithecus*, is an African relic possessing many points of interest to science. The skull is more fully complete than any other anthropoid fossil thus far known. Also experts think that it displays a nearer affinity to humanity than *Dryopithecus* itself.

Darwin considered Africa as the probable cradle land of humanity. Prof. Elliot Smith, after weighing all the evidences bearing on this problem that have accumulated since Darwin's day, now concludes that "it seems probable that the birth-place of the Human family lies somewhere between the Himalayas and the heart of Africa."

This much is demonstrable, that for untold ages tentative types of man tenanted the woodlands and forests of Europe, Asia and Africa. Their petrified relics have come to light in all these continents, while their entrance into Australia was barred by the intervening ocean until comparatively modern times when *Homo sapiens* had arrived on the scene.

Now that he had arisen, man's superior brain and extremely pliable tactual organs, supplemented by his greatly

improved powers of vision, soon enabled him to more than hold his own in the struggle for existence. Man's higher understanding permitted him to cope with difficulties and dangers insuperable to other animals. The adaptation of his lower extremities and trunk to a practically upright posture, and the liberation of his fore-feet for use as hands conferred a power of greatly increasing his range of experience by means of touch. This, in its turn, led to the acquisition of a manual dexterity far superior to that of any other creature.

These and other advantages made him the victor in life's battle. No other animal organism has so far evolved the remarkable adaptability of man to the endless changes and chances of life. Man has permanently established himself in surroundings of the most diverse character, and his superior powers of locomotion, natural and artificial, allowed him to settle and survive in every quarter

of the globe.

Multitudinous must have been Nature's experiments with ape-men and men-apes before modern man—*Homo sapiens*—ultimately emerged. He was destined through his outstanding skill and intelligence to eclipse all humanoid competitors, and finally ensure their extinction. Herbert Spencer long since stressed the far reaching importance of the part played by the highly adaptable hands of men, apes, and monkeys in the evolution of mental power. And now our eminent anatomist and anthropologist, Elliot Smith assures us that: "The outstanding distinction of *Homo sapiens* is the possession of small and amazingly adaptable hands endowed with the aptitude, in virtue of the high development of the frontal region of the brain, to attain a perfection of skill which made them the special instruments of man's destiny."

T. F. PALMER.
(in *The Freethinker*).

THE POPE DECLARES WAR ON RELIGIOUS HYSTERIA.

Order of Nuns Suppressed.

CARMELITE RULES TO BE RELAXED, MONK FORBIDDEN TO SAY MASS.

Pope Pius XI. has opened a Europe-wide campaign against religious manifestations in which hysteria, morbid introspection and undue mysticism play any part. The people most affected are women. It has also been ordered that nuns of the closed orders be no longer allowed to follow a life of complete seclusion from the outside world.

The latest evidence of the move against undue mysticism is the suppression of a religious community of women known as

the "Little Hosts" in the archbishopric of Taranto.

The fiat issued by the Holy Office on the order of the Pope directs that all vows taken by the adherents are annulled and that they either return to their homes or pass to another religious order. The founder, Margherita Spezzaferri, is forbidden to don a religious garb in any shape or form; the oratory set up in her house is interdicted, and any service of worship prohibited therein.

The reason for the application of these unusually strict measures is that the community had become fanatically mystical and self-searching.

Good Works the Test

The present campaign aims at encouraging a religious life in which piety is combined with good works. It marks a line of new action by the Pope, following the completion of the strict revision of church observances on questions concerning votive candles, church lighting and decoration ordered by him, together with provisions for ensuring simplicity of life in church institutions.

The Taranto case follows certain action taken within recent weeks in Italy, Germany, Spain, Belgium, and Sweeden. In Italy steps have been taken against a Franciscan monk, Father Pio, who bore marks claimed to be stigmata. He had a large following, mostly women, and the "Little Hosts" is one of the institutions which was inspired through him. Nobody is now allowed to be received by him. He has been forbidden to say Mass and a copious literature that had grown around him and his works has been placed on the Index.

Sent to Hospital.

A German peasant girl, Teresa Neumann, also marked with the stigmata,

has been sent to hospital as a purely pathological or psychical case for medical observation.

In the North of Spain another type of the kind has been similarly dealt with and in another case the ecstasies of a Dominican nun in Belgium have been checked.

The Pope is also against the super-rigorous regulations which prevail in some convents. The order of Saint Bridget of Sweeden has had to modify its rules. A convent following rigid observance has been closed in Viterbo and the nuns sent elsewhere. Carmelite nuns of the branch which observes such complete isolation from the world that they are known as the "buried alive" have had their extreme practices modified and from now on no new entrants are to be allowed.

The whole campaign—for such it may be called—can, indeed, be pronounced as a reform of great importance and significance. It reflects the character of Pope Pius XI., a man of action himself, who wishes to direct the spiritual power of the Church into channels of active Christianity, and by safeguarding against the hysteria of fanaticism to direct religious womenkind to a wider mission of piety in the world.

[If the above report is true, one cannot help praising the Pope for his sensible decision to put a stop to and discourage the disgusting fanaticism and mysticism of certain classes of women in the Roman Catholic Church. Nuns are generally an objectionable lot all round, more so when they become hysterical, as they are very prone to, on religious questions. Nothing is ridiculous for them, and it is they who make a perfect mockery of religion. The pity is that many unbalanced and emotional young women imitate the "piety" of these abnormal women and in the end become morbid creatures themselves. Of late, a number of new cults have been introduced in the Church of Rome, one as stupid as the other. We need only mention the cult of Theresa Lizieux, who was herself a deeply morbid person, which appeals so much to ignorant and fanatical women and also men of the weaker class. Any objectionable cult in the Church of Rome can generally be traced to mystical and ignorant women of the peasant class. In strictly suppressing these things the Pope will have the support of every right thinking person, and most Freethinkers, we are sure, will think the better of him.

ED. REASON.]

Telegrams :—"POCKETWALA."

HAJI MOHDDIN FAZAL KARIM.

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